

POPULAR Computing WEEKLY

35p

7-13 July 1983 Vol 2 No 27

This Week

BBC software

John Scriven takes a critical look at some of the latest word processing and graphics packages for the BBC on page 14.

Spectrum execution

Ian Logan explains how programs are executed in the third of his five-part series on the Spectrum. See page 23.

Oric bomber

Lue Fountain presents a city bomber program which demonstrates some of the graphic capabilities of the Oric. See page 19.

New releases

All the latest software games including news of two new programs from Ultimate Play the Game. See page 49.

★ STAR
Mini Pacman on
Vic20. See
page 10.
GAME ★

News Desk

Prism hit by computer crime

THREE thousand Spectrums were stolen from a warehouse in Hornsey on Sunday, June 26. The stolen Spectrums, worth approximately £380,000, were being stored by Prism prior to distribution to retailers.

A four-strong gang faked an accident outside the warehouse. An employee, who opened the gate to help, was threatened with a sawn-off shotgun. Two lorries were then filled with Spectrums and driven off.

Coincidentally, 200 Sanyo MBC 400 computers were recently stolen from a container lorry. The 16 bit machines are so new that they have not even reached the dealers yet — the stolen models were the first batch.

● Although TV programmes like *The Consultant* have stressed the increasingly sophisticated use of computers in crime, these thefts are a reminder that the micro industry is also susceptible to more conventional crime.

Oric software disagreement



Paul Kuczora of Salamander.

SALAMANDER is angry over Oric's decision to change its software plans.

Marketing manager, Paul Kuczora, said: "We had a letter of intent from Oric — we were promised they would take 5,000 cassettes a month from us."

The problem derives from

Oric's plans to issue its own software — provisional agreements were reached with a number of independent software houses to supply programs that would be issued under an Oric label, Salamander chief amongst them.

Paul says that Salamander

Continued on page 5

Classified

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DOGFIGHTERS, 32K BBC Frantic Arcade game with m/c, play friend or computer, optional joysticks, incredible mode, 2 graphics and full harmony, £4.50. Scott Basham, 17 Dayncourt Gardens, Upminster Essex.

Continued on page 44

WINDOW ON ANOTHER WORLD

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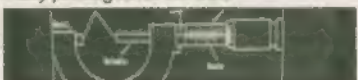
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Accuracy

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Puzzle, Top 10, Ziggurat

Editorial

Is the writing on the wall for the ZX81?
 Is the micro that launched a thousand
 video games coming to the end of its
 natural life?

These questions are not entirely
 rhetorical, for they affect everyone
 who has bought a ZX81 together with
 all the subsidiary industries that have
 grown up around it.

When the Spectrum was first
 launched, over a year ago now, a
 number of people predicted that the
 days of the ZX81 were numbered. But,
 they were wrong. Sinclair dropped the
 price of the ZX81 and it continued to
 sell in respectable quantities.

However, Sinclair has subsequently
 cut the price of the Spectrum to
 combat the threat of competitors like
 the Dragon, Oric and Aquarius. Admit-
 tedly Sinclair also reduced the price of
 the ZX81 again, down to £39.95, but
 with the 16K Spectrum at £99 the
 differential between the two machines
 in closing. Why, after all, pay £39 for a
 black and white micro with 1K of Ram
 when, for an additional £50, you could
 buy a colour micro with 16K Ram?

Sinclair can undoubtedly drop the
 price of the ZX81 yet further and still
 make money on it. But, with the
 Spectrum also likely to come down in
 price again, it may be easier to dis-
 pense with the ZX81 entirely.

The ZX81 is unlikely to disappear
 immediately, certainly not before
 Christmas, but the chances of it being
 around for Christmas 1984 are looking
 remote.

Next Thursday

Do you have the skill and the daring
 needed to complete Bomber Run? Find
 out in next week's Star Game for the
 Commodore 64 by Les Allan.

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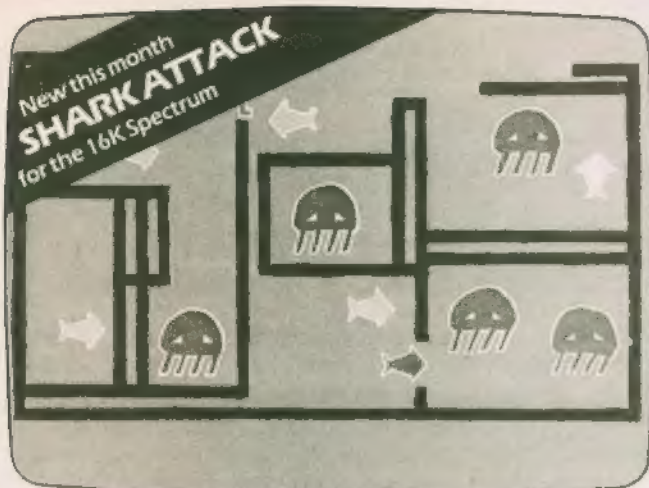
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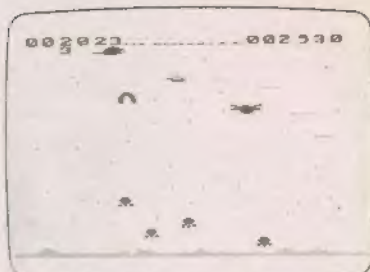
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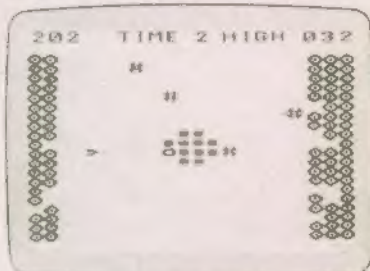
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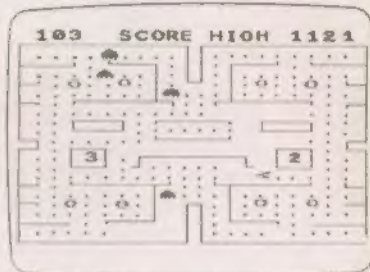
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computer

Oric software

Continued from page 1

was never told of Oric's move out of software, and that they only found out by reading about it in the computer press. "Neither Oric nor their tape duplicating company Cosma could tell us what was going on."

Oric software distribution has now been taken over by Tansoft.

Tansoft managing director, Paul Kaufman, said: "We have been left in a bit of a mess. I know some people are not getting the orders they were hoping for, but we are distributing Salamander's own Oric programs — we are on good terms with them."

John Tullis, Oric chairman explained, "All that happened was that we decided to leave the software side to the people who know best — I certainly don't think that any firm orders were affected."

Psion to sell Spectrum range of software in US



PSION is currently negotiating with Timex to sell its Spectrum range of software in the US. The software will be converted to run on the Timex/Sinclair 2000 machines, due to be launched in September.

Technical director Charles Davies explained that it was easy to convert Psion's Spectrum programs to the TS2000 machines, because their prog-

rams did not use any Spectrum Rom routines. The only real differences between the machines, as far as converting software is concerned, involves the joysticks and sound generation, he said.

Providing the deal is satisfactorily concluded — a settlement is expected within days — most of the software will be released on cartridge. Prices have yet to be finalised, but Timex has already revealed that its cassettes will cost between \$9.99 and \$19.95 and its cartridges between \$12.95 and \$29.95.

All the Psion range will be included in the deal, except for *Planetoids*, *Space Raiders* and possibly *Scrabble*.

● Little Genius, which has the home computer rights to *Scrabble* in the UK, and has a licencing agreement with Psion, is currently negotiating with US firms Felchow & Righter and Ritam for the US rights.

Vid Kid hits the big time

"THE Vid Kid" is a weekly column about home video games that is syndicated in 11 different newspapers throughout the United States. The writer of this column, Rawson Stovall, is just 11 years old.

The column first appeared in the *Abilene Reporter-News* a year ago. The then 10-year-old Rawson approached the

paper's executive editor Dick Tarply with the idea for the column and four samples of his work. Dick Tarply liked the idea and snapped up the column immediately.

Other newspapers which now carry the column include *The Odessa American*, the *San Jose Mercury* and *Universal Press Syndicate*.

Rawson hopes to have his column appear in more than 100 newspapers by the end of the year.

£69 interface

A NEW £69 interface will connect any RS232c/423 micro to an Olivetti Praxis 30 typewriter.

Further details from Tim-Ton Micro, 9 Ilton Road, Penylan, Cardiff CF2 5DU.

Atari/Commodore — the battle continues

THE Atari/Commodore legal tussles over the rights to the *Pac-man* copyright continues.

Originally scheduled to come to court in June, Atari has presented changes to its claim which will delay the hearing till October. Commodore has complicated the proceedings by withdrawing its contentious *Jelly-Monsters* title, replacing it with *Cosmic Crunchers*.

Ace software

REMSoft has almost doubled the software available for the Jupiter Ace by putting out 15 new titles.

These include utilities like *Toolkit/Screenkit* for machine-code programming and screen handling, *Character Designer* (16K) for user-definable characters, *Picasso* (19K) for drawing and saving pictures, *Strings* (19K) giving 40 string-handling commands, and *Ace Assembler* (4K) and *Dis-assembler* (6K).

Other packages interface the Ace to either a Sinclair ZX printer or to the Tandy GP115 four-colour printer/plotter.

Games tapes include *Frogger*, *Aliens* and *Graphic Golf* (all 19K).

More details from Remsoft, 18 George Street, Brighton, BN2 1RH.

Fuller's premises damaged by fire

FULLER Micro Systems' Liverpool base has been hit by fire. The damage is estimated at between £6,000 and £7,000.

Thieves apparently broke into Fuller's premises at 17 Sweeting Street on Saturday, June 25, between 10.30 pm and 11.30 pm. After stealing £2 in cash, they set light to the premises before leaving.

Fortunately, an architect working in a neighbouring building spotted the fire and called the fire brigade.

This upset is not expected to affect Fuller's production of keyboards and sound boxes, though a few individual orders may be affected. Retail mana-

ger, Frank Lawton, explained that the second-floor of the building was unaffected by the fire, enabling Fuller to carry on as usual.



Fuller — after the fire

"In any event," said Frank, "we were planning to move to new premises in Dale Street in four to five weeks anyway. This has just speeded things up a little."

Acorn's BBC micro — ready for launch in US

THE BBC computer is to be launched in the US within the next few months. Acorn has set up an American counterpart, Acorn Computers Corporation, in Massachusetts.

The US machine is basically a model B, with a number of 'extras' fitted as standard. These include an interface for disc drives and the View word-processing chip. Other changes concern adapting the

Model B for the US tv system. Price is \$955 — well above that of the Commodore and Atari home micros.

Senior Vice-President of ACC, Harvey Lawner, said: "There is a lot of interest here in the BBC as an educational machine — the BBC tv computer programmes have been taken by 220 of the 280 Public Broadcasting System channels."

Dare YOU enlist as a Free-System warrior?

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If you think that you are brave and skilful enough for this task, write to our Headquarters Address below. Give details of your name and address, enclose a cheque/P.O. for £8.75 and by return you will receive all you need to begin, including a Program and Training Cassette, a "Top Secret" Datatank Instruction Manual and a Keyboard Overlay (used to prepare your computer for action).

If you join me in this valiant crusade, GOOD LUCK in your efforts.

T.R.O.F.F. (Training Robot Officer of the Free-System Federation)



Dragon Software Retailers keen to recruit volunteer "Drone" fighters into their own Battalion can contact us for details of our trade terms. If you decide to phone us, our scrambler is operational 24 hours so don't worry about bugging, we are permanently on battle alert.

Any programmers who wish to join us in ensuring that the best programs will always be "available by Cable" should contact us with details of any original programs written and will hear about the attractive prospects we can offer for marketing any program good enough to meet our very high standards.

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A3 Pads at £5.99 and A4 Pads at £2.99 (which includes VAT and postage) can be ordered direct from PSL Marketing. State name & address and type of computer when ordering, and enclose your cheque or P.O. Your local Dragon dealer should also be stocking the Logic-Plan range, but if you don't see any on display tell your dealer that he can obtain supplies from us at 24 hours notice.

ANY DEALER NOT ALREADY STOCKING LOGIC-PLAN SHOULD DO SO QUICKLY. CONTACT US NOW!

LETTERS

Copy-cat programs

I must first congratulate you on your stand in refusing to advertise those software libraries who lend tapes against the wishes, or without the permission of, the manufacturer, a matter about which I wrote to you last December.

I turn now to the question of software protection against the abundance of "Copy-Cat" programs that are being advertised in your, and other, magazines.

Let me first set the record straight as a programmer by saying that, however hard we try, there is no way of making a program completely copy-proof, especially when it is on a tape cassette. We all use techniques which make it as difficult as possible for the average home user to break into a program and, indeed, without a good working knowledge of machine code it is usually very hard to do so.

"Copy-Cat" programs change this. They are purposefully written to undo the "locks" and make copies. With their aid anyone with even a poor working knowledge of the English language can make copies.

The producers of "Copy-Cat" programs must realise that the vast majority of their sales will be used to copy commercial programs from friends and neighbours, thereby breaking the copyright act. It may seem like a "great deal" to the home user who is getting all this "free software" for the price of a copying program, but let me warn such short-sighted people that the more programs that are copied, the lower are the sales of the genuine article. Less money returns to the authors and manufacturers, who then have less incentive and less capital to develop new programs. The end result of all this would be fewer manufacturers and authors selling a narrower range of games at higher prices to cover their costs.

I find it ironic that many of the customers who write to magazines complaining about the "exorbitant" and "outrageous" cost of games are themselves inching up the price by home piracy of these programs.

In an effort to avoid the main use of "Copy-Cat" programs, the advertisement "blurb" usually takes the selling line that the program "allows you to make back-up copies of your precious programs". Firstly, you do not need a copying tape for programs that you yourself have written, since you will know the details of any locks you have built into it. Secondly, if the manufacturers of commercial programs were willing for you to make back-up copies then they would supply details of how to do so. They do not.

Now, the "Copy-Cat" still has the dubiously valid point that your tape might get mangled by your recorder, put through the washing or erased in a nuclear holocaust, and then what do you do? In my experience (and I have used a large number of tapes for a long time), I have yet to lose a program in such a manner, but I do accept that there is always a very small chance of this happening. With this in mind, I make the following suggestion:

All software houses (and this is something that could be agreed on within the newly-formed GOSH-Group of Software Houses) should operate the policy that if a customer's cassette becomes inoperable for any reason, then it will be replaced on receipt of the damaged cassette by the company with a new cassette of the same game. This would either be done free of charge or for a nominal cost of around 50p to cover the new cassette and postage (library case and inlay card would not need to be replaced).

This policy is something that would cost the software houses very little if anything, since the cost of bulk cassette duplication is around 45p a cassette, and anyway the replacement rate would be very low.

This simple measure would remove what little excuse the "Copy-Cat" sellers have, and we would then feel justified in asking the computer press to ban their advertisements, and the retailers to ban their product. Since a blank cassette on which to make a "back-up" costs 50p anyway, it would also make it uneconomical for the user to do so.

It is very difficult to make working tape-to-tape copies (I

have tried it with one of my own games), so I can only assume that most home piracy is done with copying tapes. It is therefore worth noting by the software houses that the banning of such tapes would greatly reduce copying of cassettes lent by libraries or under the "Buy 'n' Try" scheme, thereby making such schemes more acceptable to them.

I look forward to the hopefully favourable reaction of yourselves, GOSH and any other software houses to my proposal.

David M Webb
Southolme
9 Park Road
Woking
Surrey GU27 7BW

Reliable compiler?

I am looking for a reliable compiler for my ZX Spectrum 48K. Could you advise?

About a week ago I purchased *Jetpac* from Ultimate Play The Game and I am still amazed at the graphics. I would like to congratulate Ultimate for producing such an excellent program. If all their games are going to be like this, I shall be sitting on the edge of my seat eagerly awaiting their publications.

J Hosking
Tower Farm
St Buryan
Penzance
Cornwall

If you look at our 26 May/1 June issue, you will see that we reviewed Softek's Super C compiler for the 48K Spectrum. Personal Software Services also produces a compiler — *Mcode* — for the Spectrum. Softek is based at 329 Croxted Road, London, SE21 and PSS is located at 452 Stony Stanton Road, Coventry CV6 5DG.

Will it run the bath?

I read with interest in this week's PCW (16-22 June) that the CES Consumer show in Chicago went off with great success. But, what interested me even more, was the bit about the new Timex computers. As many people may know, Timex and Sinclair work together in producing the Sinclair computers in the

UK. But, looking at the American computers (the Timex-Spectrum ones), I wonder just who is getting the better deal.

The three computers that Timex have produced carry the Sinclair logo and are licensed from Sinclair Research. Now, unless I have left something out, I fail to understand why the American Spectrums are better than ours?

To give an example, the TS2048 computer (equivalent to the 16K Spectrum) has a number of additions that are not present on our computer. Namely, better design, improved keys, silver finish, more Ram, I/O ports and other sundry items — all this for only £98 (the £ = \$1.52).

The ZX81, or rather the TS1500, has been done up — moving keys, better design and an internal 16K Ram and costs only £50. Surely "Sir" Uncle Clive must know what's going on. Why couldn't he have given us the TS2048, etc, instead of putting up with the 'prototypes'? The British people have had to wait months, put up with flat or dodgy keyboards, Ram pack wobbles, "crashes" and other idiosyncrasies whilst the Yanks get the debugged, polished, gleaming computers that we should have had in the first place.

It's the old cliché, "British Brains, American Gains". Clive must realise that it was us and not the Americans who gave him the opportunity to make computers. I suppose that when (and it's a big when) the Microdrives arrive and the British "guinea pigs" have fallen in love with it, it will wing its way over the pond and the Yanks will add a few bits on and reduce the price with the result of a better drive. Does the TS in the TS2048, etc, stand for Timex/Sinclair?

I suppose that when the flat tv comes out the Yanks will give it a round screen (for all-round entertainment: get it?), put in stereo speakers, add a video, make it talk to you, dry the dishes, get your slippers, run the bath and other items at a cost of \$3.99, not forgetting \$2 p&p.

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STARFIRE Spectrum 486 RIG THE GALAXY OF THE STARDAN BATTLE CRUISE - A GAME OF STRATEGY AND SKILL. by Martin Davies. VGA 1983.



YUMP Spectrum 486 & 640 COMMAND THE PARAS AND TAKE ON THE IMPOSSIBLE. by T. Murray & S. Poole. VGA 1987.



LANDFALL (BBC II) AN EXCITING AND REALISTIC SPACE SHIP LANDING SIMULATOR. by Gregory Trout. VGA 1983.



RWS BOMB (BBC II) A SHOOTING AND BOMB ARCANE GAME. by James Street. VGA 1981.



SPACE ADVENTURE (BBC II) A GRAPHIC ADVENTURE SET ON A SEEMINGLY ABANDONED SHIP DRIFTING THROUGH SPACE. by J. Thomas & A. Thomas. VGA 1988.

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Mini Pacman

A new game for Vic20 by Richard Watson

Mini Pacman is another game based on the maze-chase theme. You must eat your way around a maze, while avoiding being eaten by the attendant ghosts.

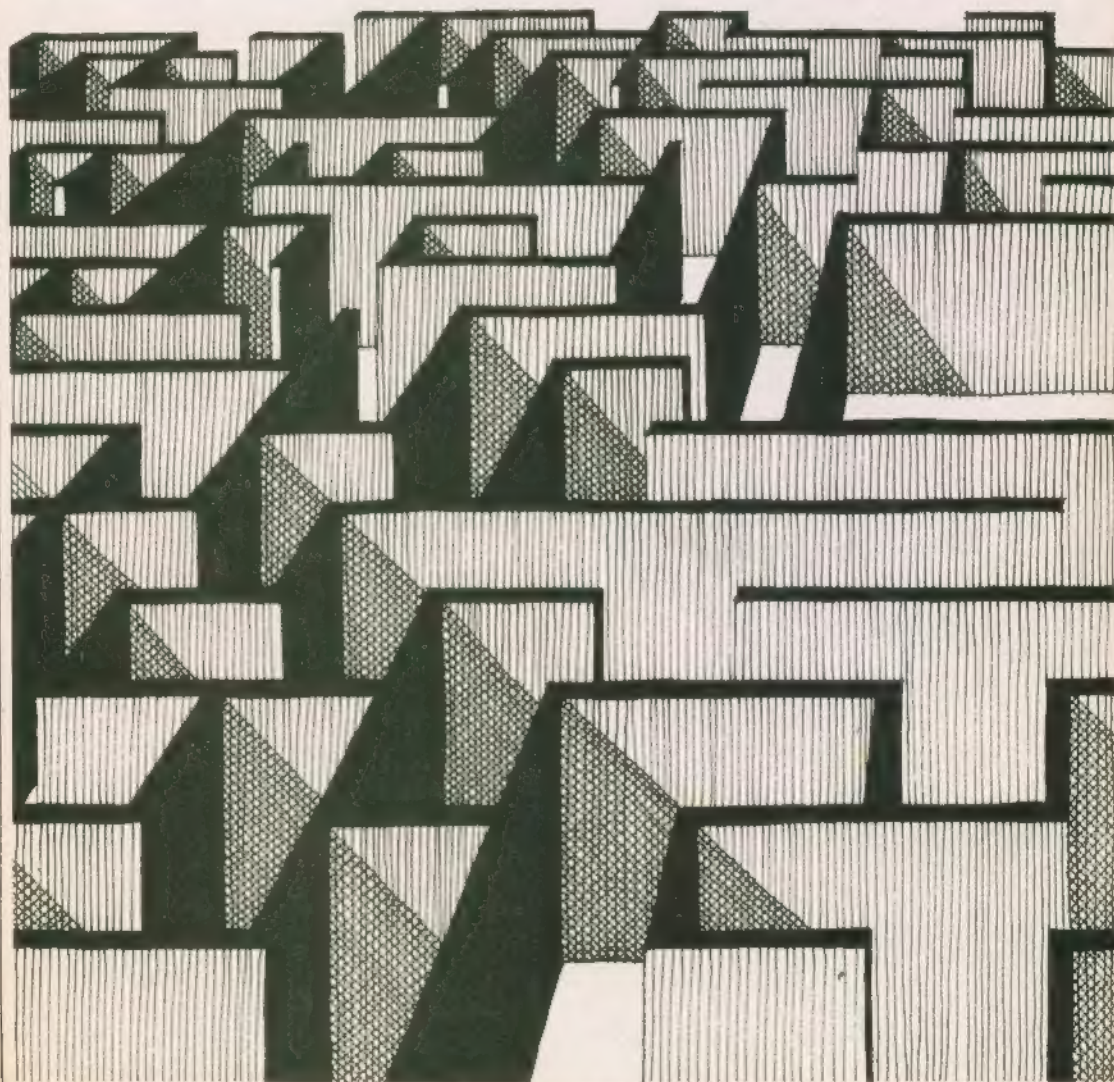
This program is designed for a Vic20 with Super Expander, but it will work on an unexpanded Vic if you delete line 820 and change line 320 to 320 K = Peek (197).

The program makes use of user defined graphics and can be played with either keyboard or joystick.

Variables

I = counter
R = counter
A = data

M = direction of movement
SC = score
M (1 & 2) = the ghosts' direction
M (1 & 2) = the ghosts' direction
J = joystick
K = keyboard
MO = movement
X = random number
AS = get




```

2 REM *****
3 REM *** R.WATSON'S ***
4 REM *** MINI PACMAN***
5 REM *****
6 REM
7 REM
9 POKE 36878,15
10 POKE 36879,8
20 REM
22 REM ***** INITIALISE *****
25 REM
30 PRINT"***** MINI PAC-MAN"
35 PRINT"*****"
40 PRINT"*****BY R.WATSON."
42 FORR=1TO1200:NEXT
50 REM ** DEFINE CHARACTERS **
55 POKE 56,20:POKE 52,20
60 FOR I=7168 TO 7223
70 READ A:POKE I,A:NEXT I
80 REM ** DATA FOR CHARS **
100 DATA 60,118,252,240,240,252,126,60
110 DATA 60,110,63,15,15,63,126,60
120 DATA 28,62,42,62,62,62,62,62
130 DATA 0,0,0,24,24,0,0,0
140 DATA 0,0,36,24,24,36,0,0
150 DATA 0,255,255,255,255,255,255,0
160 DATA 126,126,126,126,126,126,126,126
170 M=7903:D=1:C=0:SC=0
172 G(1)=8118:M(1)=-22
175 G(2)=8118:M(2)=-1
200 REM
202 REM ***** DRAW GRID *****
205 REM
207 POKE 36869,255
210 PRINT"*****";
215 FOR I=1 TO 5
220 PRINT"FOCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCF";
230 PRINT"FOEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEF";
235 PRINT"FOCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCF";
240 PRINT"FOEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEF";
245 NEXT I
250 PRINT"*****";
255 PRINT"*****";
260 PRINT"*****";
265 POKE 8185,160
270 POKE M,C
272 POKE G(1),2:POKE G(2),2
275 POKE 7900,160:POKE 7921,160
300 REM
302 REM ***** MOVE PACMAN *****
305 REM
310 REM ** INPUT MOVE **
315 IF PEEK(197)=64 AND RJOY(0)=0 THEN 400
320 J=RJOY(0):K=PEEK(197):MO=0
325 IF J=1 OR K=89 THEN MO=-22
330 IF J=2 OR K=26 THEN MO=22
335 IF J=4 OR K=17 THEN MO=-1
340 IF J=6 OR K=18 THEN MO=1
360 D=MO
370 IF D=1 THEN C=0
380 IF D=-1 THEN C=1

```

```

400 REM ** MOVE PACMAN **
405 POKE 36876,220
410 IF PEEK(M+D)=2 THEN 900
415 IF PEEK(M+D)<160 AND PEEK(M+D)>4 THEN
D=0
420 POKE M,160
422 IF PEEK(M+D)=3 THEN SC=SC+10
423 IF PEEK(M+D)=4 THEN SC=SC+30
425 M=M+D:POKE M,C
430 IF M=7900 THEN POKE M,160:M=7920:POKE
M,C
435 IF M=7921 THEN POKE M,160:M=7901:POKE
M,C
490 PRINT"*****SCORE:";
SC;
500 REM
502 REM ***** MOVE GHOSTS *****
505 REM
510 FOR I=1 TO 2
520 X=INT(RND(1)*3)+1
530 IF PEEK(G(I)+M(I))=5 OR PEEK(G(I)+M(I))
=6 THEN 550
540 IF X<1 THEN 600
550 X=INT(RND(1)*2)+1
560 IF M(I)=1 OR M(I)=-1 THEN 580
570 IF X=1 AND PEEK(G(I)+1)<6 THEN M(I)=1
:GOTO 600
575 IF X=2 AND PEEK(G(I)-1)<6 THEN M(I)=
-1
576 GOTO 600
580 IF X=1 AND PEEK(G(I)+22)<5 THEN M(I)
=22
585 IF X=2 AND PEEK(G(I)-22)<5 THEN M(I)
=-22
600 IF PEEK(G(I))=0 OR PEEK(G(I))=1 THEN
900
602 POKE G(I),3
605 POKE 36876,8
610 PO=PEEK(G(I)+M(I))
615 IF PO=5 OR PO=6 THEN 550
620 IF PO>160 THEN 550
650 G(I)=G(I)+M(I)
660 POKE G(I),2
665 NEXT I
670 GOTO 300
900 REM
902 REM ***** EATEN *****
905 REM
910 PRINT"*****GAME OVER"
915 POKE 36876,8
920 PRINT"*****ANOTHER GAME"
930 PRINT"*****"
940 POKE 198,8
950 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN950
960 IF A$="Y"THEN POKE36869,240:RUN
970 IF A$<"N"THEN950
980 POKE36869,240
985 POKE 36879,27:PRINT"*****":END

```

READY.

From the top down

David Kelly talks to Robert Branton and Geoff Boyd of Memotech

Memotech is still little over a year old, but it is growing at a phenomenal rate. Even Robert Branton — one of its founders — says that everything is going so quickly that at times it's a bit worrying.

At the Earls Court Computer Fair, last month, the company launched its own micro — the MTX500 — and joined the vanguard of UK companies challenging the US and Far East electronics giants at their own game.

Memotech was formed in the spring of 1982 by two university researchers — Robert Branton, a mathematician, was the software expert and Geoff Boyd, an engineer, was the hardware specialist.

Initially, the company built a name for itself manufacturing add-on units for the ZX81 computer. In March a 16K add-on was built followed in June by a 32K pack, a high-resolution graphics board and a Centronics interface unit.

Business was fairly quiet in the UK with over 70 percent going overseas — after all, the Spectrum had just been launched in Britain. However, in August Sinclair suffered supply problems with its own 16K Ram pack and many of the high-street chains looked to Memotech to provide an alternative.

All this time Robert and Geoff had been working on their own computer — the SM1. Development was funded by sales of the ZX81 add-ons and, since they intended to undertake their own manufacture of the new computer, they took the opportunity to gain expertise in manufacture from making the printed-circuit boards and carrying out the component insertion for the add-on memory packs.



Memotech's new offices!

In December last year, Memotech moved to its present premises at Witney, just outside Oxford. And, in the true tradition of the new technology companies, Robert and Geoff — waiting for a new factory to be built — are real Portakabin kings, with 22 of the things stacked up on site.

First thoughts for the design of the SM1 machine evolved two years ago. In January this year the design of the SM1 was modified to make it a true personal compu-

ter and thus the MTX500 was born. It has 32K Ram and 16K video Ram, based on the Z80A chip with 16 colours, high-resolution graphics and a professional style keyboard with separate numeric and function pads.

Important features of the MTX500 are its communication possibilities — with Centronics, twin RS232, twin joystick, tv, monitor and hi-fi ports plus cartridge slot, its graphics and screen handling, its built-in programming tools and its price — only £275.

In many ways its nearest competitor — although it doesn't have any machines with which it can be immediately identified — is the Acorn BBC micro.

Geoff is anxious that the machine is seen in its context as a development from a complete business system, the SM1. He feels the MTX500 has a completely different design philosophy from the BBC machine whereas the BBC machine was designed from the bottom up, the MTX500 was designed from the top down — to the minimum entry point. That is the only way, he says, that it is possible to know that all the peripherals work from the start. A typical line of expansion from an MTX500, according to Geoff, might be: the basic MTX500 followed by Rom-based additional graphics and sound commands, a single 500K 5 1/4 inch floppy disc system, as an entry into CP/M, a printer, a 256K or 500K silicon disc, a card cage, an 80 column board to make best use of the CP/M and a 10M 5 1/4 Winchester hard-disc unit.

The 16K Rom of the MTX500 incorporates some unique features. The machine uses a Basic variant developed by Memotech — its own MTX-Basic. Single keyboard entry works like BBC Basic with letters and dots — E, for Enter for example. And the Rom also includes sophisticated screen-handling, involving up to eight virtual screens and a built-in Assembler/Editor for machine-code programming.

Using the virtual screen command, it is possible to define a given portion of the display screen to be — as far as the computer is concerned — the whole screen. This means that the computer can operate on one part of the screen — one



Robert Branton (left) and Geoff Boyd

virtual screen — independently of the rest.

Material can be edited on-screen before being committed to the computer's memory. Typing *Edit* defines the virtual screen being accessed as an editor. You can then type in and correct material before pressing the *Enter* key to enter the information.

The virtual screen capability is ideal also for animated graphics, particularly since the computer has a sprite (moveable graphics characters) facility. It is also unusual in that one of the 16 colours is transparent. Not much use you may think but, for example, the transparent colour can be used to make dominant sprites appear to pass behind less dominant ones — whilst in fact they do still pass in front.

The MTX500 uses the TI99/18 graphics chip and has 16K video memory. To make good use of the graphics handling the computer incorporates some Logo-type commands in its Basic — *Move*, *Advance*, *Rotate Left*, *Rotate Right*.

The computer has a text mode of 40 x 24 characters and a high-resolution graphics mode of 256 x 192 pixels. Text can be put on to the high-resolution screen in a 32 x 24 format. It is possible to switch modes from text to graphics and back at will without losing anything.

Perhaps the single most interesting feature of the MTX500 is its front panel display. Accessed from the Basic with the command *Panel* it shows three virtual screens — the machine's built-in machine-code assembler/editor and disassembler. The screens show the CPU registers and their contents, a selected block of assembled machine-code and its assembly-code equivalent.

Having used the front panel to assemble code you can then disassemble it. More than that, you can then execute the code — one instruction at a time — and see what is happening. A boon for de-bugging machine-code programs.

Software for the MTX500 is now under way. Already Memotech has five machine-code games written — *Toado*, *Kilopede*, *Super Minefield*, *Chess* and *Draughts*. A word processor, spreadsheet and accounting programs are on the way.

The machine will, at first, only be available through specialist computer shops — starting in September. Memotech expects to sell production, one-third to the UK, one-third to the US and one-third to the rest of the world.

In other words . . .

John Scriven looks at a range of word processing, filing and graphics programs for the BBC

When you have just paid out the best part of three or four hundred pounds on a computer, then to simply use it to play *Space Zappo* seems rather wasteful. The BBC micro is certainly good for games, but more and more people are looking for serious uses for their investment. The same sort of argument applies to schools — a very large section of the ownership.

The business potential of the BBC machine is an area that is only just beginning to be tapped. I should like to consider at the present, the more "serious" side of this computer.

Word-processing (or W-P) used to be far too expensive for ordinary mortals, until packages began to be written for the most elementary of machines. The idea behind W-P is that the computer is used to store text. This can be saved on a filing system and recalled at a later date. The text can be altered, formatted (set out as required), and finally printed.

Dedicated W-P machines tend to be both expensive and complicated, and most users do not need all the facilities offered. Buying a software package for your micro can give you the opportunity to store letters, diaries; in fact almost anything you would previously have typed or written. You need a printer, of course, but with the prices of these down to around £200, they are often the first choice for a peripheral

H & H Software produce a W-P package on cassette or disk called *Alphabeta*, costing £14.50. On loading, a menu is displayed giving you the option of loading previously stored text, reviewing existing text or loading instructions. These are fully formatted and can be used to practice altering commands or moving blocks of text around.

The text is stored in line lengths of up to 80 characters, but is displayed in mode 7 (40 characters). This means that the screen acts as a window which can be moved from side to side or up and down over the text, using the cursor keys. The computer beeps when it nears the edge of the page, but carriage return and line-feeds are automatic, so complete words are moved to the next line if they will not fit.

The left-hand side of the screen contains line numbers (up to over 220), so you know how far through the document you are. To assist in centring, symbols appear at each quarter, across the page (these numbers do not appear on printing). There is a *Tab* facility, and another menu appears when you come to print the text. This gives you the ability to alter line spacing, number of copies, etc.

One useful facility is the opportunity to alter the control codes sent to the printer.

Apart from the text, computers send Ascii codes that control line feeds, double height letters, compressed text, etc. The problem is that each make of printer has its own set of codes.

While *Alphabeta* is set up for a Seikosha printer, it is possible to alter the codes to suit almost any make. It works well on an Epson FX80 and also on an OKI

Microline (the up-market *Wordwise* is not so universal and refused to print in double-spacing on this printer).

In spite of these excellent points, *Alphabeta* can be irritating to use. It is tiring on the eyes to attempt to read large lengths of text, due to the need to move the window from side to side.

It would be nice to be able to see the formatted text in an 80-column mode. This would of course eat up the memory and would render the text almost unreadable on a TV rather than a monitor, and it has to be seen as a budget W-P package. The other irritation is the painfully slow text

storage. This is necessary each time a block is stored and inserted elsewhere.

As with most things, you get what you pay for. If you write a lot, then *Wordwise* offers many advantages, but is expensive. If you want a good, inexpensive system and are prepared to put up with the limitations, then I would have no hesitation in recommending *Alphabeta*.

The BBC microcomputer is reasonably user-friendly, certainly more so than machines like the Vic20. However, it is still a comparatively long process to turn one's ideas into pretty pictures, which is why graphics packages sell well. Using them carefully, it is possible to draw circuit diagrams, opening titles that can be recorded on video cassettes, or demonstration diagrams for text-books or lectures. They also demonstrate the fundamentals of Computer Aided Design.

The three packages readily available have similar features, but the prices vary considerably.

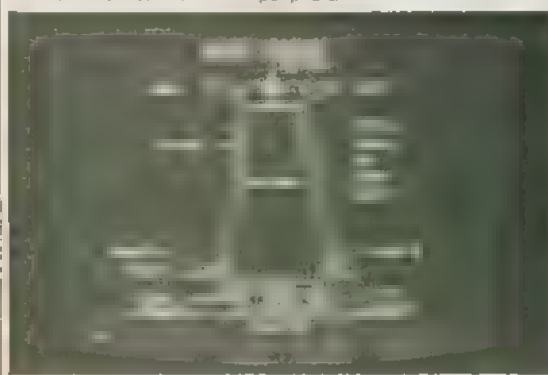
Salamander Software is the sole agent for the *EDG Graphics Package*, the most expensive at £24.95. On loading, the mode can be selected which determines the resolution and the number of colours available. A flashing, cross-hairs, cursor appears in the middle of the screen, which can be moved around using the cursor keys. The speed is determined by the length of time the key is held down, which takes a little getting used to.

There are many options which can be chosen according to the type of drawing required. Luckily, the manual is both comprehensive and clearly written, which is essential as there are over 30 options in all! These include drawing arcs, boxes, circles, triangles and dotted or solid lines. The colours of the background and foreground can be changed using the < and > keys, and text can be inserted anywhere. The amount of free memory left is shown as a percentage, and completed pictures can be saved on cassette or disk.

There is a feature called *rubber-banding* that no self-respecting graphics package should be without. This involves anchoring one end of a line, and moving the drawing cursor independently. The distance between the two points is filled with a flashing line, just like a piece of stretched elastic. When the line appears to be in the correct place, it can be filled in. If you are not happy with your most recent move, the whole display can be erased — each part held in memory can be redrawn up to the offending section.

Artist from The Software House is similar to the *EDG* package, but is considerably cheaper at £12.50. It has less features, as you would expect, but still manages drawing and filling in various shapes and rubber-banding.

Text can be displayed normally or with a dropshadow, which produces a realistic 3-D effect. Joysticks can be used, and areas can be filled in with a selection of 32 paintbrushes made up from user-defined



There are two word-processors available on Rom chips for the BBC. View from Acorn and *Wordwise* from Computer Concepts. I use *Wordwise* myself and it has several advantages. As it is on Rom, it does not take up any of the BBC's memory, leaving space for some 4,500 words. It is also available immediately on power-up, needing only "W" to be entered. It does however, cost £45 and needs at least a series 1.0 operating system. Cassette-based systems take up valuable Ram, but have the advantage of being roughly a quarter of the price, and of working with any model.

characters. This gives you the ability to achieve pointillist or stippled effects when painting.

Grafkey from Clares is the cheapest of the collection ■ £7.95 (*Grafstik* is identical, but designed for use with joysticks). You



might imagine that it ■ therefore lacking in some respect. Surprisingly, it contains most of the features of the other two, as well as some of its own.

The first program contains instructions, as well as an explanation of the use of the function keys. Options include line mode, triangle mode, rectangle mode, circle mode and text mode, and you can fill shapes or simply draw their outlines. The resolution mode can be changed during drawing, as can the colours, and there ■ a rubber-banding option. You can print a grid across the screen as a drawing aid and remove it when no longer necessary.

The *EDG* package contains everything you could need in a graphics program, but the price puts it in the professional class. Although *Grafkey* does not contain as many options as *Artist* or the *EDG* package, it is the only program that is within the price range of many people. Considering the facilities, it is by far the best value.

The last section of programs to be considered are databases. Because of their ability ■ sort and display information, computers are useful for holding banks of information on any subject that would have previously needed a card index to catalogue. The data stored can be as simple as a personal telephone directory, or ■ record of a stamp collection.

As an example, supposing you had ■ database of a stamp collection, and you wished to find out details on all your stamps from Germany. A database program would have no trouble ■ printing out all these records.

A really good database, however, could tell you how many stamps you had from Germany that had pictures of people, had a face value of less than 1 mark, and were produced after 1960. Your record would need to contain at least five fields, or separate bits of information, about each stamp; ie, catalogue number, country, face value, description and date. It should also be able to sort information into numerical catalogue order, date order, alphabetical order of picture or country, and in order of value. If you think that ■ ■ lot for ■ database program, then consider that there ■ a *Dragon* program that can do

most of these things on *Special Selection 2* — it's not the only program on the cassette, and it's less than £10!

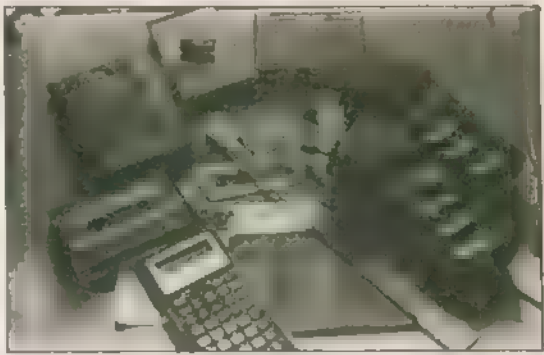
For some reason, this type of software for the BBC ■ very expensive and in some cases the software cannot justify the price. Bug-Byte produce a program called *Multifile* which allows the setting up of a simple filing system to hold, for instance, club membership records. It is well documented, and allows calculations to ■ made on numbers held in the file. This means that if the file contained graded subscriptions as one of the fields, and you wished to increase them ■ to cope with inflation, then it would be possible to increase them all by, say 5.5 percent. The program is menu-driven, and easy to use, but, for ■ comparatively short program, it ■ rather over-priced at £15.

Gemini Marketing sells a program called *BBC Database Filing System*. This contains a setting-up program to define the number and type of fields, as well as the main database program and a demonstration file. There are 11 options in all: adding new records, bytes free, deleting records,

search for records that satisfy up to 8 criteria (as in the stamp example earlier), list ■ or just selected records, modify records, print selected records, save and load to tape or disk, sort records based on any field, perform calculations on numeric fields or leave program.

This is ■ well-documented, professional program that does almost everything you could expect of a good database. Unfortunately, it costs £19.95.

It is encouraging to see serious software being developed for the BBC micro. All the programs mentioned here show a polish that is often lacking in areas such as games and education. But if they are to gain wider acceptance, software houses need to be careful not to price themselves out of the market. ■



Firm	Program	Price
Acorn dealers	View	£59.80 (Rom)
Computer Concepts 16 Wayside Chipperfield Herts WD4 9JJ	Wordwise	£46.00 (Rom)
H & H Software 53 Holloway Runcorn Cheshire	Alphabeta	£14.50 (tape)
Salamander Software 27 Ditchling Rise Brighton Sussex	EDG Graphics Package	£24.95 (tape)
The Software House 145 Oxford St London W1	Artist	£12.50 (tape)
Clares Providence House 222 Townfields Rd Winsford Cheshire	Grafkey	£7.95 (tape)
Bug-Byte 100 The Albany Old Hall St Liverpool L3 9EP	BBC Multifile	£15.00 (tape)
Gemini Marketing 9 Satterton Rd Exmouth Devon EX8 2BR	BBC Database Filing System	£19.95 (tape)

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Of mice and men

John Scriven presents a brief history of electronic mice

Time magazine has christened 1983 "the year of the mouse". This amazing announcement has nothing to do with Donald Duck's buddy, nor has it caused the more timorous to leap for their stools. The reason is that this small rodent is, like its cousin the turtle, an electronic beast.

A computer mouse is a hand-controlled peripheral device that moves along the surface of a desk. As it moves, its graphic equivalent, a little screen mouse, moves across the surface of the screen display. Instead of eyes, it has up to three buttons on its "face", while its "tail" is the connecting cable to the micro. In real terms, it combines the functions of a light pen and a joystick and enables the operator, one-handed, to move the screen mouse around the display. When it is opposite the selected option on a menu, for instance, its eye button is pressed and the menu option carried out.

Although, as yet, a rare breed in this country, there is no doubt that mice will become more popular over the next few months. When Apple's expensive new Lisa computer is released officially, it will be the first mouse that we are likely to see, although at \$6,000 plus, it will probably not be peeking its nose out of any but the most up-market offices. Other systems that use a mouse as the standard means of communication are the Xerox Star and VisiCorp's Visi-On.

computer. Later on this year, when the low-price Apple Macintosh micro is revealed, it promises to be a mouse-driven machine.

Although only just edging their way from under the skirting board, mice have been with us for a considerable time. Invented by Douglas Engelbart at the Stanford Research Institute in 1964, they are about as old as Basic itself.

The first mouse was a simple box, running on two wheels placed at right-angles to each other. When the mouse was rolled forward, one wheel rotated while the other one skidded on the desk and did not turn. If the mouse was pushed diagonally, the wheels moved proportionally to the distance pushed. Two potentiometers translated the rotation of the wheels to a voltage that was sent to the computer. Analogue/digital convertors were comparatively expensive in those days and the tracking system soon wore out.

In 1972 the Xerox corporation went to an independent inventor, Jack Hawley, in Berkeley, California, with a request to update their mouse. He produced a first version that ran on a single large ball-bearing. Apart from its smoother and long-lasting action (it sounds like a Gillette advert!), the rotating ball now sent digital

so that moving parts are no longer necessary. As the mouse moves over an array of dots on a special pad, a small bulb reflects an image onto an IC sensor chip. As the inventor, Steve Kirsch, of Mouse Systems Corporation, is reported to have said: "Yes, folks, it's all done with mirrors!"

Although a distant relative of the simple photo-cell, the specialist sensor chip recognises the pattern at the start and compares it with the new pattern reflected as the mouse moves. In this way, both distance and direction can be digitised and fed to the host computer.

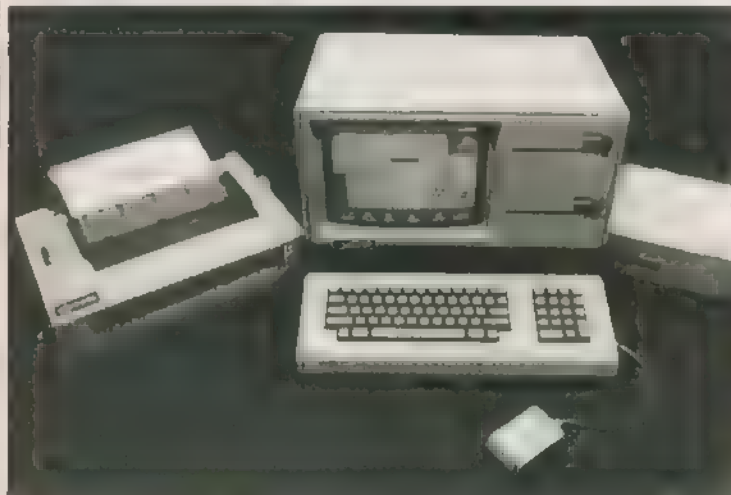
Some recent mice, including one made in Switzerland by the Deprez Corporation, incorporate a mechanical motion sensor but then decode this information digitally. The very latest ones incorporate transmitters and do not need "tails" (Manx mice?); they also continue to operate when lifted from the surface by a few centimetres.

You may wonder why so much fuss is being made over such a small peripheral device. It has been discovered that top executives do not like using computer keyboards. The reason, apparently, is that they associate the keyboard with menial labour normally carried out by the lower orders (ie, secretaries from the typing pool!), and find the action of typing demeaning. By using mice, in conjunction with an advanced language like *Smalltalk*, the executive does not feel he is using something that is beneath him.

Apple's Lisa uses this system of complex graphics with icons or little pictures on the screen instead of words. For instance, instead of typing in "delete last file", you move the mouse across over the tiny screen waste-paper basket and simply press the button. Apparently this fear of micros does not extend to such a degree to British executives and they are not afraid to "dirty their hands".

If you have an Apple, or an IBM PC, then the present price of mice may not be important to you — the cheapest mouse for either machine costs \$149 plus \$100 for the interface (from Product Associates Inc of Redwood City, California). At this price, about £160, there will be few people owning machines like Dragons willing to spend the price of their micro again on such a small device. The prices of American and Swiss mice are bound to drop considerably as volume sales are reached; a Texas firm is planning to sell a mouse for the IBM PC for \$100 later this year, complete with software.

What is also likely is that some enterprising developer in this country will produce a British mouse for £20, which is a mechanical, analogue mouse should cost. If you have a micro with built-in analogue interface, like the BBC, you could be squeaking in a few months from now! ■



The Apple Lisa with mouse.

It is not these machines that will make mice multiply in this country, however. The reason why their popularity will grow is that they are becoming available in the United States as accessories for more mundane computers (well, slightly more mundane!) like the Apple II and the IBM personal

signals, ie, electrical pulses, to the computer that could be read directly, without the need for a digital/analogue convertor. This is one of the types still used by Xerox, although recently they have moved over to an optical model.

Optical mice use the latest technology

Bombs away!

Luc Fountain uses a City Bomber Program to show off the Oric's graphics

It can be difficult for the computer novice to understand how it is possible to create shapes on the machine which look like proper objects. In this article I hope I show how it can be done on the Oric.

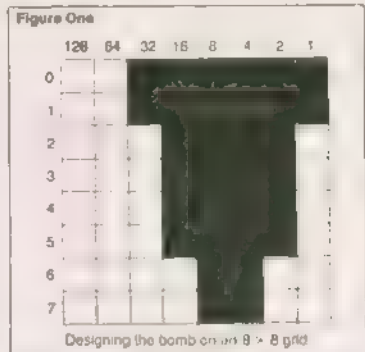
The computer doesn't really move shapes around the screen, it just draws the requested image on the screen at the place — the screen "address" — you designate. Then it does it again, at the next screen address, and so on. Thus the impression of movement is created.

The program that accompanies this article, *City Bomb*, is designed to exploit the advantages of Oric Basic. Although the images on the screen are quite effective, the graphics are extremely simple — two objects move and a collection of skyscrapers get zapped.

The 55 lines of the program can be divided into three sections: creating realistic shapes; manipulating the moving parts; and achieving the appearance of destruction, either of the skyscrapers or the pilot.

To understand how to create shapes, it is necessary to understand the user-definable graphics facility.

Let's start with the main shapes. ■ *City Bomb* there are six shapes, four of which form an aircraft that resembles a World War Two Typhoon. The fifth shape is the bomb that emerges from the plane's fuselage. The sixth is the shape of each unit of the skyscraper blocks; the skyscrapers are just vertical lines of varying numbers of blocks, randomly distributed to give the



impression of a city skyline.

Look at Figure 1, the grid which was used to draw the shape of the bomb. The bomb represents, at any point in the program, one byte, and this is divided into the eight bits (the binary digits) that form the byte, by the horizontal columns numbered 1 to 7. The eight numbers on the top of the grid give the values of each bit: 128, 64, 32, 16, 8, 4, 2, and 1. The shape of the bomb is first designed by shading in the appropriate squares and then totalling up the values of each line. For example, the values of line 7 is $8+4=12$, while line 0 adds up to 63 ($32+16+8+4+2+1$).

Now the connection with user-definable graphics. What you are going to do is change one of the characters in the Ascii list. The one chosen has the decimal code 123 and normally figures in the Oric alphabet as { . It is a character that won't normally appear in any ordinary text.

Having decided that you can do without this one, you alter it by using the *Poke* command. This is the formula — multiply the Ascii decimal code by eight: $123 \times 8 = 984$. Add 46080. This gives you 47064. Now, plant your eight bits into the address that was the character string 123.

FORA = 47064 TO 47071 READB:POKEA,B: NEXT DATA 63,63,30,30,30,30,12,12

The eight bits you have been handling have the designation 47064 to 47071. The

continued on page 21

```

2  I=48085
3  D=123
4  PRINT CHR$(6);CHR$(17)
5  PAPER0:INK7
10 FORA=47064 TO47071:READ B:POKEA,B:NEXT
20 DATA63,63,30,30,30,30,12,12
30 FORA=46808 TOA+7:READB:POKEA,B:NEXT
40 DATA32,48,56,60,63,63,63,63
50 FORA=46816 TOA+7:READB:POKEA,B:NEXT
60 DATA0,0,31,32,127,255,0,255
70 FORA=46824 TOA+7:READB:POKEA,B:NEXT
80 DATA0,0,128,241,249,255,249,241
90 FORB=A+8TOB+7:READC:POKEB,C:NEXT
100 DATA0,0,0,255,255,255,0,255
110 FORA=B+8TOA+7:READC:POKEA,C:NEXT
120 DATA63,63,63,53,63,63,63,63
122 GOSUB5000
125 CLS
127 W=48772:FOR P=N TO 49332 STEP40:POKEP,97:POKEP+1,
97:POKEP+2,97
130 POKEP+10,97:POKEP+11,97:POKEP+12,97:POKEP+13,97
140 NEXT
150 W=48500:FOR P=N TO 49180 STEP40:POKEP-1,97:POKEP-2,97:
POKEP-3,97:POKEP-4,97
160 POKE P+15,97:POKEP+14,97:POKEP+13,97:POKEP+12,97:
POKEP-19,97:POKEP-18,97
161 NEXT:W=48589:FOR P=N TO 49268STEP 40:POKEP,97:POKEP-1,97
162 POKEP-20,97:POKEP-21,97:POKEP-22,97
170 NEXT
180 W=48684:FORP=WTOW+480STEP40:POKEP-1,97:POKEP-4,97:NEXT
210 FORI=0TO1015
230 I=I+1
235 POKEI-1,32
240 POKEI,91:POKEI+1,92:POKEI+2,95:POKEI+3,93
245 I=PEEK(I+4):IF I=97 THEN EXPLODE GOTO 1000
250 IF KEYS:CHR$(27) THEN LL=20:POKE R,32:R=T+40
255 IF L=20 THENR=R+40:POKE R,1:POKE R-40,32
260 IF R>5000 THEN R=R
265 NEXT
270 PRINT CHR$(12)
275 PRINT
280 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
PRINT SP$(10);CHR$(4);CHR$(27);"N GOOD LANDING":WAIT 200
285 PRINT CHR$(4)
290 PRINT CHR$(12):GOTO1001
300 PRINT CHR$(12):PAPER1:INK6:WAIT5:PAPER0
310 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
320 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
330 PRINT CHR$(4);CHR$(27);"N GAME OVER"
340 PRINT CHR$(4)
345 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT"Any key for another go.":SET R:PRINT
CHR$(6):RUN
5000 CLS
5005 FOR N=48248 TO 48270:POKE N,91:POKE N+1,92:POKE N+2,
95:POKE N+3,93:POKE N-1,32
5020 NEXT
5025 PLOTS,5,"CITY BOMB BY L.FOUNTAIN"
5030 FOR N=48:11 TO N+20:POKE N,91:POKE N+1,92:POKE N+2,95:
POKE N+3,93:POKE N-1,32
5040 NEXT
5045 PLOTS,14,"SPACE BAR TO FIRE BOMB":WAIT200:CLS:
RETURN

```


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PROGRAMMING

Read command leads to the *Data* statement, where you give the values you reached by totting up the aggregates of lines 0 to 7 in Fig 1. In the listing, the bomb comes at lines 10 and 20.

The same process, on a larger scale, applies to the shaping of the aircraft and also the standard character for the buildings, in lines 30 to 120. The *Data* statements have to be worked out carefully and a supply of graph paper will help.

The decimal codes *Ascii* for the plane were chosen to be 91, 92, 95 and 93. These emerge when you evaluate the *Data* statements at the start, and they also show up in the subroutine from line 5000, which provides the opening sequence, in which the plane skims across the screen, or to put it more accurately, is *Poked* to a series of screen addresses. At the same time the instructions: "Space bar to fire bomb" appear.

So much for the sub-routine. Back to *Cis* line 125. Now comes the task of sketching in the city skyline, for which the *Poked* character has the decimal code *Ascii* of 97. Look at lines 127 and 130; the figure 48772 represents the screen address at which the skyscraper character is first drawn. The *Step 40* command then whisks the character the full width of the screen and plants it again immediately underneath and so on to the lowest visible point, the appearance of vertical piles

giving a strong impression of a city skyline. The same process of construction continues up to line 180. Line 210 signals the opening of the main loop, the progress of the aircraft across all the screen addresses available from close to the top of the screen to the middle of the bottom line.

The variable for this purpose was set out in line 2, *T* = 48085. That figure is the screen address at which our intrepid aviator makes his appearance high over the doomed city. His progress to each ensuing address is through the *For next* sequence, in which *X* in line 210 serves to identify the 1015 available points on the screen after 48085.

"But," you ask, "the character is *Poked* to a screen address and then another and another. Why doesn't screen simply fill up with endless wall-to-wall aircraft?" Well, of course it would, without line 235, in which the computer looks at the space last occupied and plants or *Pokes* into that address the character which has the code 32 and is actually a blank.

The same problem of blotting out the last image also occurs with the falling bomb. It is dealt with in lines 320 to 340. For another example of the principle this embodies, see the following program:

```
10 PAPER 4 INK 0
20 CLS
30 FOR B = 48050 TO 49130 STEP 40
40 POKE B-40,32 POKE B-30,32
50 POKE B,128 POKE B+10,128
```

60 NEXT
70 GOTO 30

Remember, as you see in line 30, that the command *Step 40* has the effect of repeating the image immediately below the point it appeared last, there being 40 character spaces across the screen width.

What happens in this short program is that two cursors appear to move vertically downwards, with the useful *Ascii* 32, the blank space, following along behind.

Now we see how the shapes are created and how they move. But, how does the computer know what is happening? This is where the *Peeking* starts. Line 310 says:

I = *Peek* (*T* - 4): *IF* *I* 97

and so on. What happens is that the process of *Peeking* — looking at an address — tells the computer what is happening there. And, of course, a part of an aeroplane, or a bomb, are at the same address as part of a skyscraper, then the *Explode* command is activated.

One final point. It will be noted that the *Poke* command has been extensively used where *Plot* might have been preferred. The trouble with *Plot* is that it deals only with characters, not numbers, so establishing when one character was about to collide with another would be harder. Before the plane hits a building I *Peeked* the address in front, so if the value is no longer 32, our old friend the blank space, then the plane has hit something.

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Entered and run

Ian Logan explains how programs are executed in the third of a five-part series

The Spectrum, together with the majority of other microcomputers on the market, has an operating system that enables the user to *Enter and Run Basic programs*.

A Basic program consists of a set of lines, each of which normally has one or more statements. The essential part of running a program is to consider each statement in the order determined by the programmer.

In the Spectrum, Basic lines, written with line numbers, are stored in order in the program area. The use of the line numbers is restricted at this stage to providing the user with an easy manner of identifying a line that is to be edited.

The user executes a program by entering a direct Basic line. Such a line is constructed in the edit-line buffer and is indicated as being direct by the user omitting to give any line number. The direct line may have one or more statements but the more usual forms are:

RUN — which means execute the program from line 0
GO TO n — when execution is to begin at line n

Once the syntax of the direct line has been checked, and accepted, a call is made to the subroutine *Line-run* at address 7050 (188Ah and called *Execute* by Sinclair Research). In this subroutine, the direct line is given the number '-2' and this number is stored in the system variable *Ppc* to show that the present line being interpreted is indeed line '-2'.

A loop is now entered to handle the lines of the program in turn. As each new line is considered, then the base address of the following line is entered into the system variable *Nxtlin*. When handling the direct line, the value in *Nxtlin* is the address of the end-marker at the end of the edit-line buffer — for the program line, that is the last line of a program *Nxtlin* will address the end-marker of the program area.

The lines of the program are considered to follow each other and this is the order taken, unless the programmer has determined that the order is to be changed, as with *Run*, *Goto*, etc.

Next, an inner loop is entered to deal with the statements within a line. Each statement is considered in its entirety — whilst it is being handled, the system variable *Ppc* holds the line number and the system variable *Subppc* holds the statement number.

At the end of the routines concerned with any statement the *Break* key is scanned and a report given, if the user is pressing the *Break* key. The following statement to be handled is then identified. It will be

● The next statement in the line, if such a statement exists and there is not a jump to be made.

- The first statement of the next line, if there are no further statements in the present line — the next line being found by reference to *Nxtlin*.
- A jump is to occur. The correct address for *Nxtlin* is found by performing a search of the program area for the starting address of the required line.

This last instance — when there is to be a jump — is of interest. Statements with Basic commands *Run*, *Goto*, *Gosub*, *Return* and *Next* (when being actioned) all use jumps. In the Spectrum, the destination of the jump is described as a line number and a statement number. The searching of the program area is then performed from its start.

This whole operation is very time consuming, as can be seen when performing a *For-Next* loop, which is embarrassingly slow on the Spectrum. It would be much quicker if the destination of a jump were an address, but this is not really possible with the dynamic areas of the Spectrum.

The only way of exiting from the *Line-run* subroutine is through the error handling routine. If an error is found whilst handling a statement, then it is a true run-time error. If the *Break* key is found depressed at the end of handling a statement, then the report 'Break into program' is given. Finally, if the system variable *Nxtlin* addresses an end-marker, then the report 'OK' is given. In this last case the 'OK' is handled as the error, although often no error has occurred.

The reason for the system being designed in this manner is that the error handling routine clears all the stacks, buffers and work spaces, and this has to be done before returning from *Line-run*.

Actual statements are all handled in the following manner:

- 1) First the command word of the statement is fetched.
- 2) The system variable *Ch* address is advanced to point to the following character.
- 3) A loop is entered to fetch the entries in the parameter table in turn. These will be command class codes or ASCII separator codes. The appropriate subroutines are called.
- 4) If necessary, the address of a command routine is fetched from the table and a jump made to the routine.

In cases there is a return made to *Simi-ret* at address 7030 (1B76h and called *Endsit* by Sinclair Research). In this routine, the first action is to scan for the *Break* key.

The above steps are most easily understood by considering some of the more straightforward Basic statements. Possibly the simplest statement to take first is the statement — *Cls*:

- Step 1) The command is *CLS* — clear the tv screen.
- Step 2) The system variable pointer is set to address the carriage return or ' ' character.
- Step 3) The first entry for *CLS* is fetched from the parameter table. The entry is '0' (address 6646 1AB6h). Therefore the routine *Class-*

00 is followed (address 7184, 1C10h). Commands of class are commands without operands (viz *Conl*, *Copy*, etc.) so step 4 is considered directly.

Step 4) The address of the *CLS* command routine is taken from the parameter table — address 3436 (0D6Bh) and a jump made to this routine. The screen is thereby cleared.

If the statement was being considered in syntax-time, then step 4 would not have been followed. The return after step 3 ends the syntax checking path.

As an example of a command that requires a pair of numeric operands consider the statement — *Poke m,n*.

Step 1) The command is *Poke* — enter the byte n into the location with address m.

Step 2) Advance the system variable *Ch* add to address the first character of m.

Step 3) The first entry in the parameter for *Poke* is the value '8'. Therefore the routine *Class-08* at address 7290 (1C7Ah) is to be followed next.

This routine is now given:

```

CLASS-08  CALL 1C82h      ; evaluate m
          EXPT-INUM      ; a comma?
          CP +2C          ; error if not
          JR NZ, REPORT-C
          RST 0300h
          NEXT-CHAR      ; advance CH ADD
EXPT-INUM CALL 2AF8h      ; first m, then n
          SCANNING       ; numeric or string?
          BIT 6, (FLAGS)  ; return if numeric
          RET NZ
REPORT-C  RST 0008, ERROR-1
          DEFB 08h        ; give 'nonsense in BASIC'
  
```

In the routine, the call to *SCANNING* loads to the evaluating of the present expression and the storing the result on the calculator stack. The expressions are to be separated by a comma, so this has to be checked. The call to *NEXT-CHAR* advances *CH* ADD past the comma. The testing of bit 6 of the system variable *FLAGS* ensures that only numeric values are accepted.

Step 4) The address of the *POKE* command routine is taken from the parameter table and the subroutine is called (address 7808, 1E80h). This subroutine consists of the three lines

```

CALL 1E85h
TWO-PARAM ; a subroutine that puts a
           ; into the A register and
           ; into the BC register pair
LD (BC),A ; the actual 'POKE' operation
RET       ; and performs what is necessary to complete
           ; the handling of the POKE statement.
  
```

To the machine code programmer trying to extend the Basic command set of the Spectrum, the most useful subroutines in the 'old' Rom are detailed in the table shown last week.

In the last article the syntax-module for the command — *Cls* # — was discussed. Now, the corresponding run-time module can be given:

```

LD HL,003Bh ; Black ink & white PAPER
LD (ATTR),H ; Set the permanent system
              ; variables
LD (ATTR),L ; and the temporary ones.
LD (BORDER),H ; Set BORDER also
LD (IF_FLAG),H ; Clear IF_FLAG
LD A,07h
OUT (FEH),A ; Border to go white now.
CALL 0D6Bh,CLS ; Clear the screen
  
```

This short routine can be used on the basic Spectrum (called via a *Usr* command) but it is so much more useful when it can be called directly from Basic.

Next week, we shall look at the expression evaluator.

Stored and dumped from memory

Gordon McQueen explains how images can be stored in memory and dumped on the graphics screen

This program runs in 32K. It uses 16K to store graphic images, each of size 1536 bytes; ie, one graphics page. The main program is contained in lines 100 to 160 and 1000 to 1110. The extra lines

contain an example display

The program uses two machine code routines, one to get the display from the screen and store it in memory and the other to do the reverse; ie, get the display

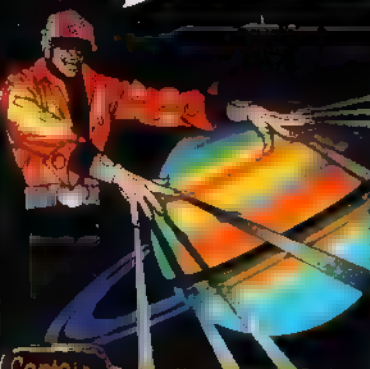
from memory and dump it on to the graphics screen.

The machine code routines get an address stored at location 32766 decimal — this is the location at which the contents of the graphic screen will be stored at or loaded from. This is why the *For-Next* loop is used to input individual displays and to output the displays.

The routine used to store a graphics page into memory is executed from 7d76 hex and the routine used to display a graphics page from memory is executed from 7d64 hex.

```
0 REM ANIMATION
1 REM BY GORDON MCQUEEN
2 REM FOR THE DRAGON 32 OR
3 REM 32K TANDY COLOUR COMPUTER
10 DATA 190, 127, 254, 16, 142, 6, 0, 166, 128
20 DATA 167, 160, 16, 140, 12, 0, 38, 246, 57, 190
30 DATA 127, 254, 16, 142, 6, 0, 166, 160, 167, 128
40 DATA 16, 140, 12, 0, 38, 246, 57
50 FOR I=&H7D64 TO &H7D87
60 READ A
70 POKE I,A
80 NEXT I
90 CLEAR 1000,32000
100 PMODE3,1
110 PCLS
120 SCREEN1,0
130 D=2
140 FOR XX=16384 TO 29000 STEP 1536
150 POKE 32766,XX/256
160 POKE32767,0
170 REM GRAPHICS DISPLAY HERE
180 FOR X=0 TO 255 STEP D*2
190 LINE(X,0)-(255-X,47),PSET
200 NEXT X
210 FOR Y=0 TO 47 STEP D
220 LINE(0,Y)-(255,47-Y),PSET
230 NEXT Y
240 EXEC&H7D76
250 D=D+2
260 PCLS
270 NEXT XX
1000 REM PROGRAM TO DISPLAY GRAPHICS
1010 FOR XX=16384 TO 28672 STEP 1536
1020 POKE 32766,XX/256
1030 POKE 32767,0
1040 EXEC &H7D64
1050 NEXT XX
1060 FOR XX=28672 TO 16384 STEP -1536
1070 POKE 32766,XX/256
1080 POKE 32767,0
1090 EXEC&H7D64
1100 NEXT XX
1110 GOTO 1000
```

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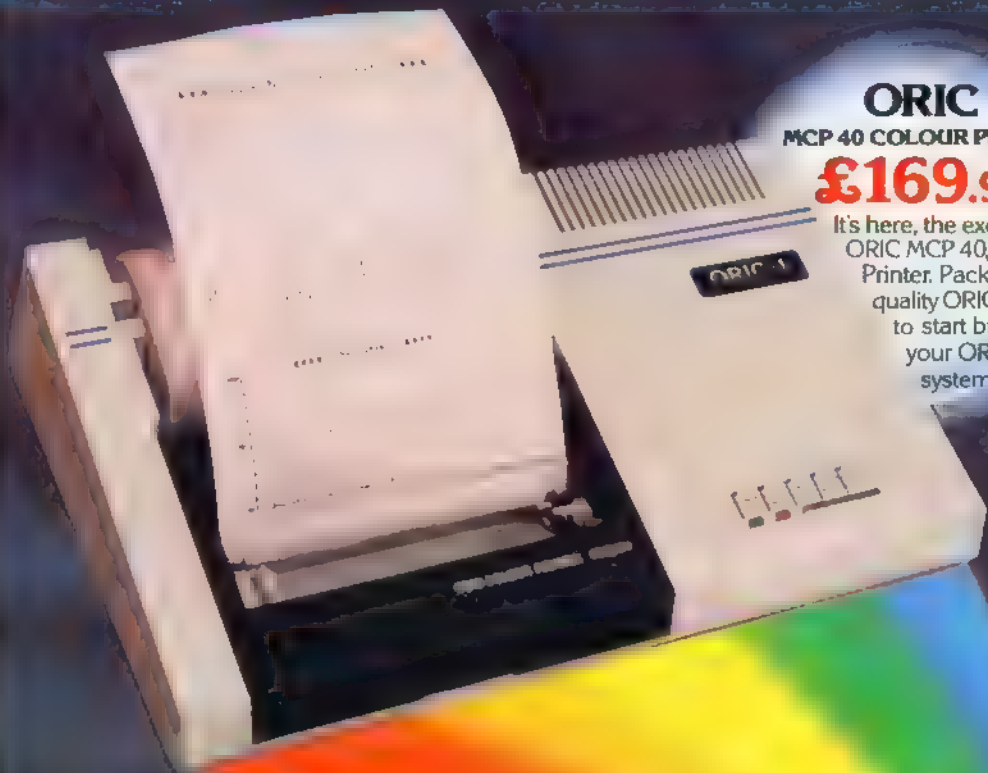
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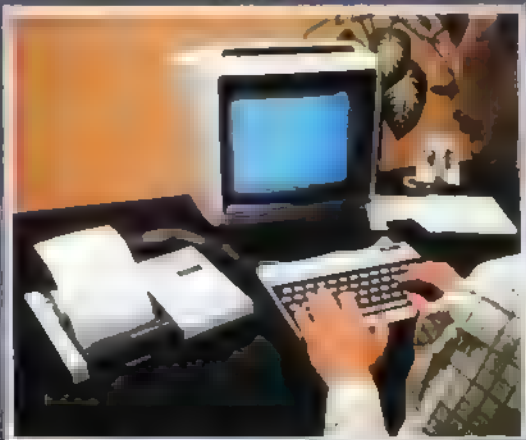
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Tunnel vision...

Boris Allan opens a window on tunnel graphics and the use of actual colours

There are many interesting facets to graphics on the BBC computer — one of the most interesting (but strangely under-used) is the concept of logical versus actual colours.

Another facet — also under-used — is the use of the graphics window for drawing rectangles. It is quicker to draw a rectangle by setting a graphics window, and clearing the background to the appropriate colour, than it is to draw the rectangle by two triangles.

Start with the drawing of rectangles: to draw a rectangle with co-ordinates $X1, Y1, X2, Y2$ we set up a graphics window by use of a `Vdu 24` command (User Manual, page 58):

```
VDU 24,X1,Y1,X2,Y2
```

The difference between the comma (twice 24 and $X1$) and the semicolons is crucial. The comma instructs the system to send the preceding number as one byte (so that the number has to be within -255 to 255). The semicolon sends the preceding number as two bytes (normally limits of -32768 to 32767). As the co-ordinates lie between zero and 1279 or 1023 they must be sent as two bytes (being greater than 255), and this is true of any `Vdu` command which sends high resolution co-ordinates to the system.

To set the rectangle to a colour C we use the `Gcol` command, but have to add on 128 as we are using the background colour (see page 166 of the User Manual):

```
GCOL 0,C+128
```

This is a speedy way to draw a rectangle

of colour C (ie. logical colour C , which usually is the same as the actual colour).

The alternative way of drawing a rectangle is to treat the rectangle as being composed of two triangles, and to use the `Plot 85,X,Y` command (see page 320 of the User Manual). For the same co-ordinates as before, we move to a point without plotting by:

```
PLOT 4,X1,Y1
```

and then draw a line:

```
PLOT 5,X1,Y2
```

which is turned into a triangle by the plotting moving to another apex:

```
PLOT 85,X2,Y1
```

Having drawn one triangle, we continue to draw the next triangle by one more command:

```
PLOT 85,X2,Y2
```

and this completes our rectangle.

Suppose we have a background of colour 129 (the actual colour number for red), and wish to change the colour to blue. There are two ways to proceed we can clear the background to the new colour by `Gcol` and clearing the graphics window; or we can change the logical colour 129 to the actual colour number 132 by:

```
VDU 19,129,132,0,0,0
```

(User Manual, page 169). The second of the two methods is far simpler.

To illustrate these methods I have developed an application I call *Tunnel Graphics*. The idea behind *Tunnel Graphics* is that we have a succession of borders of varying colours, and the colours change, seeming to advance towards the middle: there are 16 different converging borders. The colours are changed by altering the assignment to logical colours.

Consider the first program (the window version) which uses the graphics window to draw rectangles and logical assignments to change colours. The program is designed to operate in mode 1 (though it will operate in other modes) and uses a byte vector N to store 16 values which correspond to the logical numbers. AS holds the result of an `Inkey$` later in the program.

Line 1160 shows that successive elements of N hold successive values from 0 to 7. The graphics colour 1% is then assigned to the background colour by `Procgccl`, and by use of `Procsetquad` a rectangle is drawn, successively becoming smaller. Line 1200 resets the graphics window to the full screen.

From 1210 to 1280 there is an indefinite loop, terminated by depressing the `Fkey`, which decrements (line 1230) the actual colour (modulo 8) for each band, and then assigns the new logical colour (line 1240).

The first procedure `Procgccl` sets the logical colour for the background (which explains the +128 in line 1310). The second procedure sets up successively smaller graphics screens (in line 1340), then clears the graphics window.

In the second program (the triangle version) the only changes are to the procedures: this shows the flexibility of BBC Basic. The main differences in the procedures are that in `Procgccl` the foreground colour is set, and `Procsetquad` uses triangles to draw the shapes.

It is worth timing the programs: I time the creation of the borders/tunnel effect by the first program as taking about four seconds, the other program takes about five-and-a-half seconds — the difference is such that it makes sense, for applications which fit, to use graphics windows where possible. It makes even more sense to use actual colours, and vary them, rather than manipulating logical colours.

```
1000REM-----
1010
1020 *
1030 REM TUNNEL GRAPHICS
1040
1050 REM WINDOW VERSION
1060
1070
1080 REM (c) BORIS ALLAN, 1993
1090
1100
1110
1120REM-----
1130 MODE 2
1140 DIM N 15, AS(1)
1150 FOR IX=0 TO 15
1160 N*IX=IX MOD 8
1170 PROCGCCL(IX)
1180 PROCSETQUAD(IX)
1190 NEXT IX
1200 VDU 24,0,0,1279,1023
1210 REPEAT
1220 FOR IX=0 TO 15
1230 N*IX = (7 + N*IX) MOD 8
1240 VDU 19,IX,N*IX,0,0,0
1250 NEXT IX
1260 AS=INKEY$(0)
1270 *FX15,1
1280 UNTIL AS="F"
1290 END
1300 DEF PROCGCCL(JX)
1310 GCOL 0,(JX MOD 8)+128
1320 ENDPROC : REM GCOL
1330 DEF PROCSETQUAD(JX)
1340 VDU 24,JX*40,JX*32,1279-JX*40,1023-JX*32
1350 CLG
1360 ENDPROC : REM SETQUAD
```

```
1000REM-----
1010
1020
1030 REM TUNNEL GRAPHICS
1040
1050 REM TRIANGLE VERSION
1060
1070
1080 REM (c) BORIS ALLAN, 1993
1090
1100
1110
1120REM-----
1130 MODE 2
1140 DIM N 15, AS(1)
1150 FOR IX=0 TO 15
1160 N*IX=IX MOD 8
1170 PROCGCCL(IX)
1180 PROCSETQUAD(IX)
1190 NEXT IX
1200 VDU 24,0,0,1279,1023
1210 REPEAT
1220 FOR IX=0 TO 15
1230 N*IX = (7 + N*IX) MOD 8
1240 VDU 19,IX,N*IX,0,0,0
1250 NEXT IX
1260 AS=INKEY$(0)
1270 *FX15,1
1280 UNTIL AS="F"
1290 END
1300 DEF PROCGCCL(JX)
1310 GCOL 0, JX MOD 8
1320 ENDPROC : REM GCOL
1330 DEF PROCSETQUAD(JX)
1340 PLOT 4,JX*40,JX*32
1350 PLOT 5,JX*40,1023-JX*32
1360 PLOT 85,1279-JX*40,JX*32
1370 PLOT 85,1279-JX*40,1023-JX*32
1380 ENDPROC : REM SETQUAD
```


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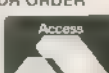
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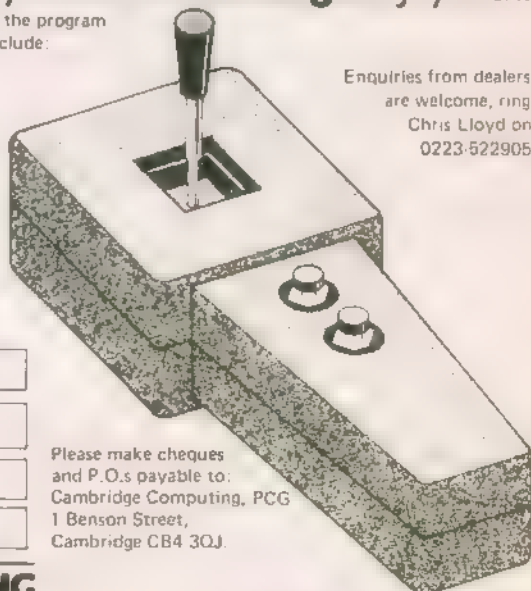
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```

180 IF X%=CHR$(136) X=X-1
185*FX15,0
190 PRINTAB(X,11)""
195 IF MID$(A$(1),X+1,1)="" OR MID$(A$(1),X+1,1)="" THEN PRINT
"CHR$(136) IS SOUNDO
15,29,1: SOUND1, 15,100,2:FOR F=1 TO 100:
NEXT F:PRINT G=1,11:MID$(A$(1),X+1,1):FOR
F=1 TO 5000:
NEXT F:G=GET:RUN
200 DEFND 1:
210 A$(21)=LEFT$(F%,D)+LEFT$(B%,LENB%-2*D)
PRINT A$(F%,D)
220 PRINTAB(G,21):G=G+1
230 NEXT F
232 IF ADV.1:GOTO245
235 VDU 23,245,8,60,126,255,252,56,24,16
237 ADV=ADV+1
240 GOTO 90
245 IF ADV>2:GOTO275
250 VDU 23,245,16,56,84,238,84,16,16,16
260 ADV=ADV+1

```

```

270 GOTO90
275 IF ADV>3:GOTO295
280 VDU 23,245,24,90,165,165,165,153,66,60
285 ADV=ADV+1
290 GOTO90
295 IF ADV>4:GOTO325
300 VDU 23,245,0,0,8,28,107,62,20,0
310 ADV=ADV+1
320 GOTO90
325 IF ADV>5:GOTO365
330 VDU 23,245,16,16,56,124,254,84,16,56
340 ADV=ADV+1
350 GOTO90
365 IF ADV>6:GOTO395
370 VDU 23,245,60,66,129,129,129,129,66,60
380 ADV=ADV+1
390 GOTO90
395 VDU 23,245,126,126,102,102,102,102,126,126
400 ADV=1
410 GOTO90

```

Cruiser
by Gareth Jones

Scroll

on Lynx

This program demonstrates that scrolling is possible on the Lynx. Ports 12 and 13 of the VDU controller together control the position of the origin of the display on the screen. By changing the values of these ports using the out command in Basic or an equivalent machine code instruction

will move the origin about the screen.

The smallest vertical move is 4 pixels corresponding to a change in the value in the ports of 32 or 820. Multiples of 32 cause vertical movement of the origin, other values cause horizontal moves as well.

A character on the Lynx is 10 pixels high and this program scrolls by 8 pixels and 12 pixels alternatively.

The machine code routine is stored in

line 100 and the data in line 110. After running the program the screen can be cleared and reset and the data reinitialised using *ProcC*.

Two other tricks were used, normally there is a border of 16 pixels at the top and bottom of the screen which is not used by print. The print statement prevents a 16 pixel gap in the scrolled output. There is a bug in the mod function which gives 3 mod 8 as 2, the +0.1 fixes it.

```

100 CODE E5 DD E1 DD 6E 00 DD 66 01 DD
5E 02 16 00 0E 87 3E 07 19 A4 67 DD 75
00 DD 74 01 3E 0D D3 86 3D ED 69 D3 86
ED 61 CB 6B 28 04 CB AB 18 02 CB EB DD
73 02
110 CODE 20 00 40
120 DIM A$(7)(7)
130 A$(0)=""
140 FOR I=1 TO 7
150 READ A$(I)
160 NEXT I
170 DATA WHO,SAYS,THAT,THE,LYNX,CAN'T,SCROLL?
180 PROTECT 0
190 CLS
200 FOR N=0 TO 72
210 INK (N MOD 7)+1
220 CALL LCTN(100),LCTN(110)
230 PRINT @ 3,N*10;N,A$((N+0.1)MOD 8)
240 NEXT N
250 END
260 DEFPROC C
270 OUT 186,12
280 OUT 187,0
290 OUT 186,13
300 OUT 187,0
310 DPOKE LCTN(110),10020
320 POKE LCTN(110)+2,140
330 CLS
340 ENDPROC

```

Scroll
by Kym Wilson

Space Wasps

on Spectrum

In this game, written for a 16K Spectrum, you are the pilot of a galactic fighter searching for the breeding ground of the space wasps that are threatening ■ colonise your planet.

Initially the screen will show a scan of the whole Universe. The flashing square can be moved to pick ■ sector you may wish to investigate (press fire to travel into that sector).

Once in a sector occupied by space wasps the screen of your ship will show a sight and an indicator of the wasps position ■ that sector (the two white dots must be positioned over the red sections of the lines for the wasp ■ appear on the screen, eg, if the dots are toward the ■ and D then you must move right and down by pressing the ■ and 5 keys together). You must have the wasp in the sight to ■ it. The wasp will try to avoid you as it is unarmed, but you can move faster than them.

When all the wasps in the sector have been destroyed you may land on a planet (if there are any in that sector) to refuel. The planet will be destroyed on take off. If you run out of fuel you will die and the machine will play you a death march.

The breeding ground ■ always hidden from view and cannot be found until all the wasps in that sector are dead. Your on-board computer will automatically destroy the hive and then display your score.

Controls

←5 8→
16 7↑
√5+6 +8↘
~5+7 7+8↗

To select option on landing use 8 to select No and 5 to select Yes. 0 will perform the action you have selected.

Diagonal movements are only possible ■ the battle 'phase' of the game.

Program notes

Lines

0020-0140 Long range scan

0230-0322 Prints battle screen
0325-0370 Main loop
1000-1014 Prints general instructions
1020-1250 Sets up universe (a\$) and UDG
2000-2020 Move left, right, up and down
2027-2090 Diagonal movements
2500-2645 You fired
2610-2710 You hit
3000-3190 Landing routine
3500-3510 Print wasp or space if on screen
4000-4080 You win
5000-5010 You lose and play death march
7000-7010 Set random colour for wasp and planet

Graphics

A lines 180 1090 and 2580
B 190 1100 and 3130
CDE 320 and 2070
F 2610

NB The character in lines 250 and 1110 is not a space, it is a graphic 8

The game can be made harder or easier by altering the value of the fuel f in line 1020, or number of aliens x ■ line 1090, or number of planets x ■ line 1100 and pn in line 1020.

PROGRAM OF THE WEEK

```

10 GO SUB 1000
20 PAPER 1: CLS : FOR y=1 TO 1
30 PRINT INK 5; AT y+2,0; a$(y)
40 NEXT y
50 FOR t=c TO c+3
60 PRINT INK 3; OVER 1; FLASH
1. AT t,d;
62 NEXT t
65 PRINT INK 7; FLASH 1; AT 20,
0. " LONG RANGE SCANNER NOW ACTIV
E
66 PAUSE 20
67 BEEP .03,0
70 IF INKEY$="" THEN GO TO G5
75 FOR t=c TO c+3
80 PRINT INK 5; OVER 1; FLASH
3. AT t,d;
3. NEXT t
90 IF INKEY$="8" AND d<25 THEN
LET d=d+4: BEEP .02,20
100 IF INKEY$="5" AND d>0 THEN
LET d=d-4: BEEP .02,15
110 IF INKEY$="6" AND c<12 THEN
LET c=c+4: BEEP .02,20
120 IF INKEY$="7" AND c>3 THEN
LET c=c-4: BEEP .02,15
130 IF INKEY$="0" THEN GO TO 15
2
140 GO TO 50
150 FOR s=1 TO 4: FOR t=1 TO 7:
PAPER t: CLS : BORDER t-1: BEEP
.01,t+5: NEXT t: NEXT s: BORDER
0: PAPER 0: CLS
155 LET a1=0: LET p=0: LET h=0
160 FOR y=c-2 TO c+1
170 FOR x=d-1 TO d+4
180 IF a$(y,x)="x" THEN LET a1=
a1+1
190 IF a$(y,x)="♦" THEN LET p=p
+1
200 IF a$(y,x)=" " THEN LET h=h+1
210 NEXT x
220 NEXT y
225 IF a1=0 AND p=0 AND h=0 THE
N GO TO 3700
227 IF a1=0 AND h=1 THEN GO SUB
4000
226 IF a1=0 AND p>0 THEN GO SUB
3000
230 INK 7: PLOT 0,24: DRAW 255,
235 LET xa=INT (RND*15): LET ya
=INT (RND*32)
237 GO SUB 7000
240 FOR t=0 TO 5: BEEP .02,20+t
NEXT t
250 PRINT INK 0; PAPER 3; AT 0,3
: " TOTAL ALIENS KILLED = "ta;"
260 PRINT PAPER 6; INK 0; AT 19,
14: " COMPUTER SHOWS " AT 20,14

```

```

" THERE ARE "a1;" ALIENS" AT 21
,14: " AND "p;" PLANETS HERE" PA
PER 0, INK 7; AT 21,0: "FUEL = "f
270 PRINT INK 4; AT 19,0: "R"
: INK 2: " : INK 4: "R"
280 PRINT INK 4; AT 20,0: "U"
: INK 2: " : INK 4: "D"
290 PRINT AT 21,7: " "
295 INK 7: PLOT ya+30,15: PLOT
xa+42,10
310 PRINT INK 6; AT 9,15: " " AT
9,17: " "
320 LET b$="00"
322 GO SUB 3500
325 LET i$=INKEY$
326 IF i$="0" THEN GO SUB 2500
328 IF i$="8" THEN GO SUB 2000
330 IF IN i$>255 THEN GO SUB 2
027
340 IF INKEY$="0" THEN GO SUB 2
500
345 LET b$=" "
347 GO SUB 3500
355 LET ya=ya-(ya<15)+(ya>14)
360 LET xa=xa+(xa>9)-(xa<9)
370 GO TO 270
1005 LET m$=" YOUR MISSION
ON

```

THE SWARMS TO FIND AND DESTROY
YOU START WITH BREEDING GROUND. 250 UNITS OF FUEL
AND THIS DECREASES RAPIDLY
AS YOU MOVE AND FIRE.

T GIVES YOU LANDING ON A PLANE
OF FUEL. AN EXTRA 50 UNITS
ON EACH YOU CAN ONLY LAND
PLANET ONCE.

FOR EACH YOU SCORE 5 POINTS
KILL OF FUEL. ALIEN YOU DESTROY.
NIT OF FUEL. 1 POINT FOR EACH U
EVERY PLANET REMAINING.
1006 LET f=2: LET x=0. LET l=LEN
m\$

```

1007 FOR n=1 TO 1
1008 IF f=0 THEN GO TO 1010
1009 LET f=f+1: LET c=0
1010 PRINT AT f,k: "R"
1011 BEEP AND/100: AND#50
1012 PRINT AT f,k; m$(n): LET k=k
+1
1014 NEXT n
1020 PAUSE 50: CLEAR: LET c=3:
LET pn=16: LET d=0: LET f=250: R
ESTORE: DIM a$(15,32): LET in=5
9390: LET ta=0
1022 PRINT FLASH 1, BRIGHT 1; AT

```

```

1 9."INITIALISING"
1026 GO TO 1090
1030 FOR y=0 TO x
1040 LET s=INT (RND*16): IF a<1
OR a>16 THEN GO TO 1040
1050 LET b=INT (RND*32): IF b<1
OR b>32 THEN GO TO 1050
1060 IF a$(a,b) <> " " THEN GO TO
1040
1070 LET a$(a,b)=c$
1080 NEXT y
1090 RETURN
1095 LET x=60: LET c$="x": GO SU
B 1030
1100 LET x=16: LET c$="o": GO SU
B 1030
*1110 LET x=1: LET c$=" ": GO SUB
1030
1190 BORDER 0
1200 FOR t=0 TO 7
1210 FOR a=144 TO 149: READ b: P
OKE USR CHR$(a+t),b: NEXT a
1220 NEXT t
1230 DATA 0,0,0,95,95,65,0,24,0,
240,240,165,36,60,3,153,152,0,24
,126,4,7,12,0,24,126,3,252,226,2
4,35,60,15,235,240,60,0,24,31,25
3,240,126,0,0,3,246,224,255
1250 GO TO 20
2000 LET b$=" "
2005 GO SUB 3500
2010 LET ya=ya+(3*(f$="5"))-(3*(
f$="8"))
2020 LET xa=xa+(3*(f$="7"))-(3*(
f$="6"))
2025 GO TO 2070
2027 LET b$=" ": GO SUB 3500
2030 LET xa=xa-(3*(IN in=235 OR
(IN in=239 AND INKEY$(a)="5" AND I
NKEY$(a)="5")))+(3*(IN in=231 OR I
N in=243))
2040 LET ya=ya-(3*(IN in=235 OR
(IN in=243)))+(3*(IN in=231 OR (IN
in=239 AND INKEY$(a)="5" AND INKE
Y$(a)="8"))))
2055 IF INKEY$="0" THEN GO SUB 2
500
2070 LET b$="o": GO SUB 3500
2085 LET f=f-1: IF f<0 THEN GO T
O 5000
2090 RETURN
2500 INK 7: PLOT 110,24: DRAW 22
75: DRAW 22,-75
2505 LET f=f-4
2510 BEEP .2,15: BEEP .2,20
2520 INVERSE 1: PLOT 110,24: DRA
W 22,75: DRAW 22,-75: INVERSE 0
2525 IF f<0 THEN GO TO 5000
2530 IF xa=9 THEN GO TO 2600
2540 RETURN
2600 IF ya=16 OR ya=15 OR ya=14
THEN GO TO 2610
2605 RETURN
2610 PRINT INK 2: FLASH 1: BRIGH
T 1,AT xa,ya:
2615 FOR t=0 TO 6: BEEP .1,15: B
EEP .1,20: NEXT t
2617 PRINT AT xa,ya: " "
2620 LET ta=ta+1: LET al=al-1
2645 GO SUB 2670
2650 IF al=0 AND h=0 AND p=0 THE
N GO TO 20
2655 IF al=0 AND h=1 THEN GO TO
4000
2660 IF al=0 AND p=0 THEN GO SUB
3000
2665 GO TO 235
2670 FOR y=c-2 TO c+1
2675 FOR x=d+1 TO d+4
2680 IF a$(y,x)="x" THEN LET a$(
y,x)=" ": RETURN
2690 NEXT x
2700 NEXT y
2710 RETURN
3000 CLS: PRINT INK 6,AT 19,4,"
COMPUTER REPORTS SHOW THERE",AT
20,4,"TO BE A PLANET HERE. DO Y
OU",AT 21,10,"WISH TO LAND"
3005 PRINT INK 7,AT 21,0,"FUEL =
":
3010 LET m=1
3020 PRINT FLASH 1: INK 7,AT 21,
25,"YES": FLASH 0,AT 21,30,"NO"
3025 BEEP .2,25: BEEP .3,20
3030 IF INKEY$="0" AND a=1 THEN
LET m=0: BEEP .2,10: PRINT INK 7
: FLASH 0,AT 21,25,"YES":AT 21,3
0, FLASH 1,"NO"

```

```

3040 IF INKEY$="5" AND a=0 THEN
LET m=1: BEEP .2,20: PRINT FLASH
1,AT 21,25,"YES":AT 21,30, FLAS
H 0,"NO"
3050 IF INKEY$="0" AND a=0 THEN
GO TO 20
3060 IF INKEY$="0" AND a=1 THEN
GO SUB 7000: GO TO 3080
3070 GO TO 3030
3082 CLS: LET a$=" "

```

```

T AT 19,0: INK 5: FLASH 1,b$,"L
ANDING IN PROGRESS":b$: LET a$=" "

```

```

3085 FOR t=0 TO 5: BEEP .01,25:
NEXT t
3090 FOR x=24 TO 44
3100 PLOT 0,x: INK 0: DRAW 255,
0,-PI/4
3105 BEEP .01,25
3110 NEXT x
3120 LET pn=pn-1: LET f=f+50
3130 PRINT INK 6,AT 20,2,"REFUEL
ING COMPLETE FUEL = ":f
3135 FOR t=5 TO 35 STEP 5: BEEP
.1,1: NEXT t
3140 FOR y=c-2 TO c+1
3150 FOR x=d+1 TO d+4
3160 IF a$(y,x)="o" THEN LET a$(
y,x)=" ": GO TO 3190
3170 NEXT x
3180 NEXT y
3190 FOR t=0 TO 150: NEXT t: GO
TO 20
3500 IF xa>0 AND xa<16 AND ya>-1
AND ya<26 THEN PRINT INK 0,AT
xa,ya,b$
3510 RETURN
3700 PRINT INK 6,AT 19,0,"SCANNED
REPORT: INK 7: SECTOR 13 EM
PTY. RETURNING TO LONG RANGE SCA
N."
3705 BEEP .3,0: BEEP .4,-10
3710 PAUSE 350: GO TO 20
4000 PAPER 1: CLS: PRINT INK 6:
FLASH 1,AT 21,0,"CONGRATULATIO
NS YOU HAVE FOUND ":POKE 23692,
255: PRINT INK 5: FLASH 1,"HE
SUARMS BREEDING GROUND
"AND THEREFORE COMPLETED YOUR
":TAB 11,"MISSION"

```

```

4010 PRINT INK 7: BRIGHT 1,"SC
ORE =":PLANETS LEFT #75 = "P
#75:" PLUS":REMAINING FUEL
0:" PLUS":TOTAL ALIENS
DESTROYED #5 = "ta5: INK 5: F
LASH 1,"TOTAL SCORE =":(pn#7
5)+(ta5)+f
4050 FOR t=1 TO 5
4070 FOR y=10 TO 20: BEEP .05,y:
NEXT y
4080 NEXT t
4090 PRINT INK 4: FLASH 1: BRIGH
T 1,AT 17,6,"PRESS FIRE TO PLAY
AGAIN"
4100 IF INKEY$="0" THEN GO SUB 1
020: GO TO 20
4110 IF INKEY$=" " THEN GO TO 410
0
4130 STOP
5000 PRINT PAPER 1, BRIGHT 1,AT
3,3,"YOU HAVE RUN OUT OF FUEL "
AT 5,3,"AND ARE OODDED TO DRIF
T ":AT 7,3,"IN THE EMPTYNESS O
F ":AT 9,3,"SPACE FOR EVER
!!!!!!!!!"
5010 BEEP .75,15: BEEP .75,15: B
EEP .3,15: BEEP .75,15: BEEP .75
,10: BEEP .3,17: BEEP .75,17: B
EEP .3,15: BEEP .75,15: BEEP .3,1
1: BEEP .75,15
5020 GO TO 4090
7000 LET c=INT (RND*7): IF c<2
OR c>7 THEN GO TO 7000
7010 RETURN

```

Space Wasps
by P Hackett

OPEN FORUM

Deathrace 2000

on Vic20

This game is based on the feature film *Deathrace 2000*. It makes full use of the

Vic's facilities including the auto repeat, hi-res and sound

Instructions are included within the game but the basic idea is to race at breakneck speed, avoiding the oncoming police cars and hitting the pedestrians whilst staying on the track

Program notes

Lines
130-180 Set up hi-res initialise sound and variables
195-340 Print track, scroll it, move car and put up pedestrians and police cars
500-640 Instructions in lower case
1000-1175 Print and sound explosion
1176-1200 Score and hi-score

```
10 REM*** (C) C. ANDERSON 1982 ***
20 REM*** FROM THE FILM DEATHRACE
   2000 ***
100 POKE 36879, 93: PRINT "
   INSTRUCTIONS (Y/N)"
110 GET A$: IF A$ = "N" THEN 100
120 IF A$ = "Y" THEN GOSUB 500: GOTO 130
125 GOTO 110
130 PRINT "I" POKE 52, 23: POKE 56, 23:
   CLR
140 FOR A = 71 GOTO 7679: POKE A, PEEK
   (A+25600): NEXT A: POKE 36869, 255
150 FOR A = 74 GOTO 7479: READ B: POKE A,
   255-B: NEXT
160 DATA 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 60, 126,
   126, 60, 60, 60, 126, 24, 24, 24, 126,
   90, 24, 36, 36, 102
170 DATA 24, 126, 60, 60, 60, 126, 126,
   60, 15, 15, 15, 15, 240, 240, 240, 240
175 DATA 240, 240, 240, 240, 15, 15,
   15, 15
180 CC=0: POKE 650, 128: B=10: C=12:
   POKE 36879, 15: POKE 36974, 128:
   TI$="000000"
190 REM*** RACE TRACK ***
195 FOR X=1 TO 23: PRINT TAB (X) "■" "!!!"
   NEXT
200 N=INT (RND (1)*400)-1
210 B=B+N
220 IF B < 1 THEN B=1
230 IF B > 40 THEN B=40
240 IF RND (1) < .1 THEN PRINT TAB (B)
   "!!!" "!!!" GOTO 200
245 IF RND (1) < .2 THEN PRINT TAB
   (B) "■" "!!!" "!!!" GOTO 200
250 PRINT TAB (B) "■" "!!!" "!!!"
260 GET A$: IF A$ = " " THEN C=C-1
270 IF A$ = " " THEN C=C+1
280 IF C < 1 THEN C=1
290 IF C > 40 THEN C=40
300 POKE 36900, C: 34
310 D=PEEK (76800)+120
320 IF D=10000 GOTO 36 THEN GOTO 1000
330 IF D=35 THEN SC=CC/20: POKE 36974, 0
   POKE 36875, 200: FOR L=1 TO 30:
   NEXT POKE 36875, 0: POKE 36974, 128
340 GOTO 200
500 POKE 36869, 240
510 PRINT "I THIS IS A COMPUTER
   VERSION OF THE FEATURE FILM:
   'DEATHRACE 2000'."
```

```
520 PRINT "IN THE GAME YOU RACE
   THROUGH THE STREETS
   OF NEW YORK".
530 PRINT "AND TRY TO KNOCK
   DOWN AS MANY " ".
535 PRINT "PEDESTRIANS AS YOU
   CAN WHILST AVOIDING THE"
540 PRINT "POLICE CARS."
550 PRINT "AND LET'S GO!"
560 PRINT "I" "!!!" "!!!"
570 IF PEEK (197)=64 THEN 570
580 POKE 36869, 140
590 PRINT "I YOUR CONTROLS ARE:"
600 PRINT "C=LEFT"
610 PRINT "R=RIGHT"
620 PRINT "H HIT A KEY"
630 FOR A=1 TO 100: NEXT A: IF PEEK
   (197)=64 THEN 630
640 RETURN
1000 POKE 36879, 42
1010 POKE 76800, C: 37: POKE 76800+C+1
   , 39
1040 POKE 76800+C+22, 38: POKE 76800+C+23
   , 37
1050 POKE 38400+C, 1: POKE 38400+C+1, 1
1060 POKE 38400+C+22, 1: POKE 38400+C+
   23, 1
1070 POKE 36877, 0
1080 POKE 36875, 0.
1100 POKE 36974, 0
1110 POKE 36977, 200
1120 FOR L=1 TO 60: STEP 1
1130 POKE 36979, L
1140 FOR M=1 TO 3000
1150 NEXT
1160 NEXT
1170 POKE 36877, 0
1175 FOR N=1 TO 1000: NEXT
1176 PRINT "TIME="INT (TI/60)
1177 PRINT "SCORE="SC
1178 IF SC > 1 THEN HI=SC
1179 PRINT "HIGH SCORE="HI
1180 FOR A=1 TO 3000: NEXT
1185 PRINT "AGAIN (Y/N)"
1190 IF PEEK (197)=64 THEN 1190
1200 IF PEEK (197)=11 THEN 190 ELSE END
```

Deathrace 2000
by C Anderson

River Cross

on ZX81

This is the computer version of the children's game, the object of which is for a

man to cross a fox, a hen and a bag of corn from one side of the river to the other in the minimum number of crossings, but only taking one passenger at a time.

The man must not leave behind certain incompatible combinations, ie hen with

the fox and/or corn, in which case you have failed and the game is over. To move man and/or fox or hen or corn enter the appropriate number. To cross the man only enter '1'. The program also takes into account invalid moves. Uses 2K.

```

10 REM "CROSS THE RIVER"
20 LET A$="MFHC"
30 LET B$=""
40 FOR A=3 TO 19
50 PRINT AT A,6,"(21GRAPHIC SPACES)"
60 NEXT A
70 FOR A=9 TO 12
80 PRINT AT A,6,"(21GRAPHIC A's)"
90 NEXT A
100 FOR A=11 TO 20 STEP 3
110 PRINT AT 7,A,CHR$((A-8)/3)+156)
120 PRINT AT 8,A,CHR$((A-8)/3)
130 PRINT AT 13,A," "
140 NEXT A
150 LET S=0
160 PRINT AT 16,10,"(2GRAPHIC SPACES,2SPACES)SAFE(2SPACES,2GRAPHIC SPACES)"
170 INPUT D
180 IF D<1 OR D>4 THEN GOTO 170
190 IF D>1 AND A$(1)=" " AND A$(D)<>" " THEN GOTO 490
200 IF D>1 AND B$(1)=" " AND B$(D)<>" " THEN GOTO 490
210 IF D=1 THEN GOTO 250
220 LET C$=A$(D)
230 LET A$(D)=B$(D)

```

Continued on page 39

Wink

on Dragon 32

This program shows how you can draw pictures 'secretly' on the graphics pages and then use the screen command to show the finished product.

```

5 REM ***THE WINK***
10 CLS:PCLEAR
15 PRINT:GOTO 10:WAIT FOR BT!!"
20 FOR P=1 TO 4
30 PRODU,P:PCLS
40 CIRCLE(150,50),12.5
50 CIRCLE(125,100),15.5
60 CIRCLE(195,50),12.5
70 CIRCLE(50,50),24.5:1.5,3.5
80 CIRCLE(195,50),24.5:1.5,3.5
90 NEXT P
100 PRODU,1
110 CIRCLE(50,50),12.5
120 CIRCLE(50,50),2.5
130 LINE(70,130)-(90,150),PSET
140 LINE(150,130),PSET
150 LINE(170,170),PSET
160 PRODU,2
170 CIRCLE(50,50),12.5
180 CIRCLE(50,50),2.5
190 LINE(70,150)-(170,150),PSET
200 PRODU,3
210 CIRCLE(50,50),12.5
220 CIRCLE(50,50),2.5
230 LINE(70,130)-(90,150),PSET
240 LINE(150,150),PSET
250 LINE(170,130),PSET
260 PRODU,4
270 LINE(42,50)-(58,50),PSET
280 LINE(70,130)-(90,150),PSET
290 LINE(150,150),PSET
300 LINE(170,130),PSET
310 FOR P=1 TO 4
320 PRODU,P:PAUSE,1
330 FOR DL=1 TO 800:NEAT DL
340 NEXT DL
350 FOR DL=1 TO 500:NEAT DL
360 GOTO 310

```

Wink
by Y Grainger

Cruising & Blind Alley

£10 to be won

Cruising

First there was *Spare Invaders*, then there was *Pacman* - now there is *Cruising*. This attraction machine code arcade type game, will test your powers of co-ordination to the limit. Never before has a game asked you to think so quickly or move so fast.

Achieving a high score on *Cruising* takes considerable skill and not a little patience.

Popular Computing Weekly is offering £10 each month to the player with the highest score on *Cruising*. All you have to do to enter this month's competition is send a print-out of your highest score, together with your name and address, to:

Popular Computing Weekly

Cruising

Hobhouse Court

19 Whitcomb Street

London WC2 7HF

Each month we will publish the name of the winner and the new *Cruising* high score. Are you good enough to accept the *Cruising* challenge?

The highest score sent in so far this month is 43552 from Can Doran of Skidby Mill, N. Humberside. Entries for this month's competition close on July 31.

Notes

1) Each entry must consist of a ZX printout and your name and address.

Can you beat the new high score?

2) Closing date for this month's *Cruising* challenge entries is June 30.

3) The highest score each month will win £10.

4) High scores cannot be transferred from one month to another.

5) The judges' decision is final.

6) No employees of *Sunshine Publications Ltd.* or their families, will be eligible to enter.

Blind Alley

Blind Alley is a game of strategy. In order to win you must outwit the computer, using your craft to fence in and finally destroy the enemy pursuit vehicles. But, watch out for the solid trap left by your opponents - one touch is fatal!

Each month *Popular Computing Weekly* is giving away £10 to the player with the highest score on *Blind Alley*. To enter this month's competition simply send in a copy of your score and the code at the bottom of the score table, together with your name and address to:

Popular Computing Weekly

Blind Alley

Hobhouse Court

19 Whitcomb Street

London WC2 7HF

The highest score sent in so far this month is 99527 from Mike Lamb of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. Entries for this month's competition close on July 31.

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NB. Before ordering your Spectrum add-on please check which spectrum you have in your possession. At the back of the ZX Spectrum the metallic contact strips can be clearly viewed. In the series A the space separating the strips is the same width as the strips. In the series B the strips are twice as wide as the space between

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OPEN FORUM

```

240 LET B*(D)=C#
250 LET C#=A*(1)
260 LET A*(1)=B*(1)
270 LET B*(1)=C#
280 LET S=S+1
290 FOR A=11 TO 20 STEP 3
300 PRINT AT 8,A)A*(A-B)/3)
310 PRINT AT 13,A)B*(A-B)/3)
320 NEXT A
330 IF A#=" FH " OR A#=" HC" OR A#=" FHC" THEN GOTO 370
340 IF B#=" FH " OR B#=" HC" OR B#=" FHC" THEN GOTO 370
350 IF A#=" " THEN GOTO 420
360 GOTO 170
370 PRINT AT 16,11;"X<SPACE>DANGER<SPACE>X"
380 PRINT AT 17,11;"TRY AGAIN "
390 FOR A=1 TO 70
400 NEXT A
410 GOTO 20
420 PRINT AT 16,11;"WELL DONE"
430 PRINT AT 4,7;"YOU CROSSED ",S," TIMES"
440 PRINT AT 18,9;"WOULD YOU LIKE"
450 PRINT AT 19,7;"ANOTHER GO"
460 INPUT T#
470 IF T#<>"Y" THEN STOP
480 GOTO 20
490 PRINT AT 16,10;"INVALID MOVE"
500 FOR A=1 TO 50
510 NEXT A
520 GOTO 160

```

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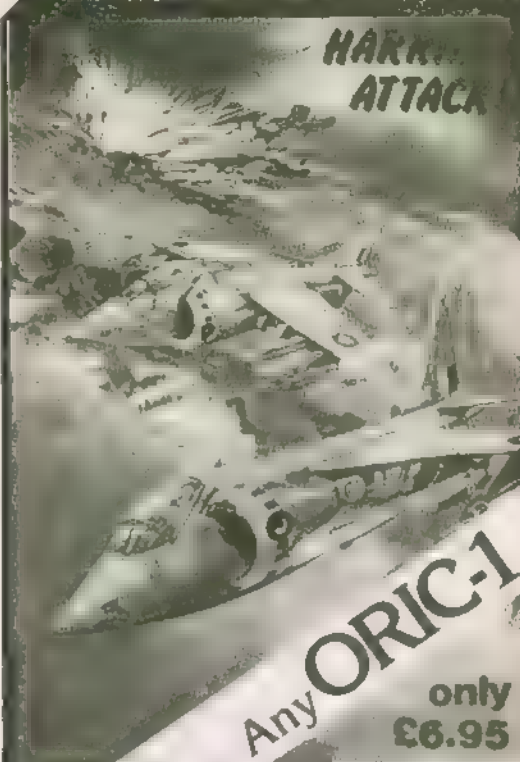
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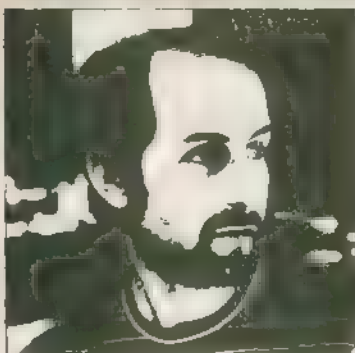
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Tony Bridge's Adventure Corner



Ring of darkness ...

Picture this: at the bottom of a dark river, a trio of sirens are singing about a hoard of gold that they have hidden. A mortal overhears them, and learns that he who makes a ring from the gold will rule the world. Of course, he steals the gold!

Meanwhile, in the castle of the gods, much lamentation is in evidence — two giants have built the castle, but in payment require the goddess of youth and beauty, without whom the gods will lose their eternal youth. The god of fire mentions the theft of the gold, and offers to recover the gold for the giants, in return for the goddess's freedom.

The gods find the mortal thief, who has made a magic helmet for himself — this enables the wearer to assume any shape he desires. The god of fire tricks him into turning himself into a toad, in which shape he is easily captured, along with his gold.

This is just the beginning of an epic tale of deception, love and hate, with gods and mortals battling out with assorted monsters, the most fantastic of which is a dragon. The young hero, having eventually braved an enchanted circle of fire to rescue a beautiful girl, the daughter of the gods, kills the dragon, whose blood enables him to hear the animals speak.

Is this the latest adventure scenario from Scott Adams or Melbourne House? Unfortunately, no! It is, actually, a very brief section of *Der Ring Des Nibelungen*, the gigantic cycle of operas written by Wagner. As someone once said, Wagner has some thrilling moments — but also some

very boring half-hours! But, the story lines are an extremely rich source of ideas for adventure scenarios, and show that inspiration can come from anywhere.

Thanks to my colleague on the *Popular Computing Weekly* team, John Scriven, I can include another gothic tale of mystery and intrigue (no, it's not his battle to get expenses from the Editor!):

Maxon stood on the edge of the forest path. In the distance he could see the towers of Borderton. He could feel the weight of the moneybelt round his waist, and looked forward to reaching the safety of the town. After stocking up with food and drink, he would invest in an axe at the weapon store.

His dim memory of past existences reminded him of battles when he'd been almost invincible. All he needed was a trusty axe and his leather armour. He cast his mind back to the last fateful time his spirit had entered the underground maze — at the bottom of the ladder he'd been wounded by a bal and his body had died, lost in the labyrinthine twistings of the tunnels. It was lucky that he'd been resurrected.

Suddenly he was wide awake. A snapping twig caused him to look up and there, in the middle of the path, stood an evil figure. Maxon turned and drew his short dagger. With a roar like an enraged bull, he leaped on the bandit that had appeared in front of him. A few seconds later it was all over.

Maxon wiped his blade clean on the grass and pocketed the half-dozen gold coins that lay near the body. With the cool breeze in his hair, he strode on to the town.

Where Almaraz the wizard and Zus the thief had failed before him, he knew that he, Maxon the warrior, had enough strength and resourcefulness to cope with any situation. Magic? You could keep it! At least for the moment.

Maxon and the others are characters that inhabit my copy of *The Ring of Darkness* from Winterset, an adventure for Dragon 32 owners. At the start you choose a name for your character, and whether it should be human, dwarf or elf, and warrior, thief or wizard. Some points for intelligence and strength can be shared as you think best — others are awarded according to the type of character.

As you can see, the start is similar to *Dungeons and Dragons*-type games. The

quest itself takes place on a screen map of the land, complete with lakes and islands. Small towns are dotted around where you may purchase food and supplies or sell excess booty. A separate high-resolution plan of each town appears on the screen.

Should you wish to explore underground (vital if you wish to find the *Ring of Darkness*), there are several entrances — this part of the adventure involves loading a separate program that contains the 3D graphics of the tunnels.

You can save your chosen character on tape each time you play, as being killed merely increases experience points for your reincarnated character — an ideal game for Buddhists!

Should your initial choice of character prove unsatisfactory, you can change to an elf-wizard with more intelligence, or indeed any combination you think more likely to succeed.

Although £10 is plenty to pay for a cassette, this program is good value, combining as it does several adventure games in one. And the ring of the title? I pin my faith on Maxon, unless the hidden archer gets him again!

Before I get to this week's problem letter, I'd just like to say thank you to the people who responded to my plea some weeks ago for a definitive solution to *The Hobbit* — I received several through the post, and also some personally from people who came to the stand at the last Microfair at Alexandra Pavilion (the best so far, don't you think — thanks Mike Johnston). I shall feature these in a corner on *The Hobbit* which I hope to get together in a couple of weeks.

On to our pleas for help — this is the first one for an Orc adventure. I F Letcher, from Bognor Regis, is in the middle of *Zodiac*, in which the idea is to collect six treasures and, of course, the 12 signs of the Zodiac. Unfortunately, he's only got five treasures and 10 signs — pretty good going, I think! A sale in a bedroom is causing the trouble does anyone have a clue to opening it?

Mr Letcher is also wondering if there is a method of negotiating mazes, a nasty example of which turns up in *Zodiac*. One obvious way is to make a map, but I realise that they are usually harder than that. So try dropping, if you can, some of those treasures that you've collected. If you do this at strategic points, you should be able to retrace your steps fairly easily as the computer tells you what is at each location.

This series of articles is designed for novice and experienced Adventurers alike. Each week Tony Bridge will be looking at different Adventures and advising you on some of the problems and pitfalls you can expect to encounter. So, if you have an Adventure you want reviewed, or if you are stuck in an Adventure and cannot progress any further, write to Tony Bridge, Adventure Corner, *Popular Computing Weekly*, Hobhouse Court, 19 Whitcomb Street London WC2 7HF.



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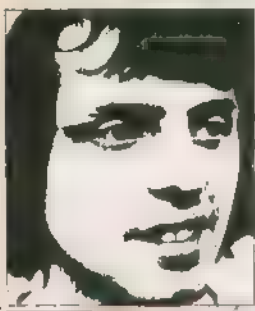
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HISTORY BOOK

Jackie Woodhouse of Coopers Walk, Watford, writes:

Q I will be starting my computer O-level course next year. I would like to know if there is any book, that is not too difficult, that will tell me something about the history of computers. I would also like something that is not too long to read.

A There is a very good paperback available called *The Myth of the Micro* by Rodney Dale and Ian Williamson. It has about 40 pages on the history of computing, from Napier's bones to the growth of Silicon Valley. You might well find this a useful book for computing generally, though it seems quite hard to find. I actually got my copy on the west coast of Scotland — it was the only computer book in a large sweet shop!

It is a Star book published by the paperback division of W H Allen. The ISBN is 0 352 30643 2.

HIGH VOLTS

Royston Blythe of Sutton Square, Heston, Middx, writes:

Q I own a 48K Spectrum. Could you please tell me if there is a *Poke* or *Out* command that will enable any of the exposed edge connections at the back of the computer to become electrically positive or negative. If it is possible to do this, would it affect the printer in any way?

A You cannot directly use either the *Poke* or the *Out* command to get a negative voltage on any of the computer lines. Usually you can only get 5v or 0v. As any

address is only on the lines for a few micro seconds, if you want to change it you will, in effect, have to capture it. This can be done with a digital port. It would then be possible to add on a small battery amplifier. So, whenever a 0v is on, the battery will create a negative voltage. If you use a digital port with a mother board, then you will be able to use a printer as well.

LYNX QUESTIONS

Gary Gluckman of Mynor Avenue, Highland Estate, Cape Town, South Africa, writes:

Q I would like to know some things about the Lynx. First, when will the Lynx enter South Africa? Secondly, will you be publishing Lynx software? Thirdly, how much will the Lynx cost in rands and cents?

A By the time you read this, we will already have published some Lynx programs. As for availability in South Africa, yes the Lynx will be going out there, but no dealership has been arranged yet, hence no price. I would not expect it to arrive until the autumn at the earliest, though it would seem logical to have it available for Christmas.

COMEX DETAILS

Phillip Judd of Penton, Stoke-on-Trent, writes:

Q I have seen the announcement of the Comex Home Computer for £150. Could you give me any details? I know that it has 35K Ram and 16K Rom.

A At the time of writing I cannot add much to that, as we have not yet seen one. It uses a chip that I know little about, the 1802. It has a proper keyboard, and interestingly a joystick as well. It has colour and sound and can be used with an ordinary cassette recorder.

BREAK-PROOF!

C J Pratt of County Oak Avenue, Brighton, Sussex, writes:

Q I would be grateful if you could help me. I have a

48K Spectrum and I would like to know how to make my programs break-proof. I have tried several routines, but without success. I can only imagine that a special *Poke* instruction is needed.

A Not so, I'm afraid. There is already a constant battle between the manufacturers and the copiers, neither side being very willing, for obvious reasons, to give away their secrets. As the state of the art stands at the moment, any program that can be written for the Spectrum can be broken, though some are more difficult than others.

I can only say that anyone who is writing programs would be well advised to put a copyright note on the program, and make it clear that no unauthorised copying is allowed.

INDEX LIST

B Luckenham of Denly Road, Manchester, writes:

Q Can you tell me whether there is an index maintained by any agency of popular science, computer, or electronics journals. The national computer centre lists extracts and references, but only of academic journals.

I am trying to trace an article on speech synthesis which I saw in a magazine on a newsagent's rack between July and September 1982 — I cannot now trace the reference. There would seem to be a need for an index but despite the educational value, no one seems to produce such a list. There is a commercial company that indexes computer games and listings, but apparently not the features and articles.

Perhaps one of your readers could fill this gap.

A The simple answer to this is no, but I heartily endorse your sentiments that such an index would be useful. I, for one, find it very difficult to keep up with all the new developments — I get on average one magazine every three

days, but I still miss a lot of stuff, which I only get to hear about a few weeks later.

However, a number of magazines do compile their own indexes — you can get a 1982 index for *Popular Computing Weekly* by sending £1.20 to PCW Index, Hobbhouse Court, 19 Whitcomb Street, London WC2.

SPECTRUM COVERTER

Jackie Tennant of Theatre Road, Watford, writes:

Q I have recently purchased a Vic20, and am getting along with it very well. With the help of a friend who has a Spectrum I am converting some of the numerous Spectrum programs to my computer (I have the 3K Ram and Super Expander Cartridge). However, some of the long program lines in the Spectrum programs will not be accepted on my Vic20. Instead I have to use more than one line.

Is this just the way the Vic works, or is there anything wrong with it?

A The reason for this is that the Vic20, like some other computers has a limit on line length of program lines. In the case of the Vic this is 255 bytes. For most purposes I would have thought this was quite sufficient, but of course fewer lines means that extra space can be made. A Vic with only 3K extra Ram will still only have 6.5K user available Ram, to the 16K Spectrums 9K user available Ram. So if you are dealing with programs that come close to filling up the 16K Spectrum's memory, you will probably find that there simply will not be enough room to transfer them to your Vic in Basic, however many space saving techniques you use. But there are plenty of Vic games around, or you can improve your programming by trying to completely rewrite the Spectrum games for the Vic.

Is there anything about your computer you don't understand, and which everyone else seems to take for granted? Whatever your problem *Peek* it to Ian Beardsmore and every week he will *Poke* back as many answers as he can. The address is *Peek & Poke*, PCW, Hobbhouse Court, 19 Whitcomb Street, London WC2 7HF.

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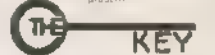
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ZX81 16K, DK Tonics Graphic Rom keyboard, Zonx sound pack, lots of tapes + £40 books/magazines, all titled in a console case + Tron 14, b/w TV + antenna, £210 Tel. 01-998 8117 (Annoosh).

ZX81 16K RAM, high-res, keyboard sounder, file 60 keyboard Offers. Tel. 01-603 5644.

ZX81 16K, DK Tonics keyboard, 32K Ram, £50. Tel: Swansea 812379.

ZX81 + 16K Ram, I/O loading aid, tape control unit, 5 books, 4 tapes, £60 (value £120) Tel. 034 285028 (Surrey) (after 7 pm).

ZX81 16K, £50 of software, 2 books, £65. Tel. 79 29376.

ZX81 16K with £20 of software, would like £40. Tel. 874 1608.

ZX81, 16K, 9 books + 9 tapes + Abacus controller, £75. Tel. Coalville 0630 222031.

ZX81 + 16K Ram manual, only 5 months' old, £45 Tel. Longfield 6488.

ZX81, 16K DK Tonics Keyboard + graphics, Rom, leads, manual + magazines, £100 software, worth £250, sell £90. Tel. Slaines 50522.

ZX81, 16K, Sinclair Ram + printer + 2 rolls of paper, £110 Tel: 0306 880806, after 6 pm.

ZX81, 16K, cassette recorder, £35 software + manuals, leads, magazines, all boxed, £65 ono Tel. Romford 68750.

Ataris for sale

ATARI VCS - 6 cartridges extra paddles, good condition, £100 ono Tel. 0434 604272.

ATARI VCS - 2 cartridges complete with paddles and joysticks good condition, as new, £65.50 Tel. Ashted 72695.

ATARI 400, 32K + 4.10 program recorder, joystick, assembler + games + £30 manuals, £270 ono Tel. 04427 73858 (evenings).

ATARI 400, 60K with program recorder with Basic and manual with joysticks, £175 + Atari software, 16 games, all well known, £12 each or £175 the lot Tel. 0732 663815 (after 4 pm).

ATARI 400 + joystick, Basic cartridge with manuals, 5 cartridges, £250 Tel. Sunbury-on-Thames 66512.

ATARI VCS + 5 tapes, £100 Tel. 01-554 3931 (after 4 pm).

SWAP ATARI 400 48K + 4 manuals + software for your Epson MX80 printer (model 2 or 3) with Atari RS232 interface and cable. Tel. 02814 4052.

ATARI 800 with cassette deck, £90 software, part exchange for BBC model III Tel. 736 3889.

ATARI VCS + 3 cartridges, manuals, leads, controls etc - Alan Cluby Bulletins. All boxed, £60 Tel. 0293 36187.

ATARI 400, 48K Ram, recorder, joystick, software, £100 + programs, 20 month guarantee, £249 ono. Tel. Harwich 2824.

ATARI VCS + 12 cartridges, very good condition, £150 ono. Tel. 03562 23069.

ATARI VCS + 5 cartridges, £75 ono. Tel. Bradford 677547.

ATARI VCS + 10 cassettes, now paddles, joystick and transformer, worth £330, will accept £150. Tel. Lea Valley 717789.

ATARI 400, 48K - Basic + recorder + joysticks + Home Financial Manager + £120 software, £250 Tel. Harlow 34068.

ATARI VCS - 3 cartridges, good condition, £90 ono. Tel. 051-426 5227 (after 5 pm).

ATARI 400 32K, £140 Tel. Berkhamstead (04427) 73858.

ATARI VCS, almost new unwanted gift, complete with joysticks, paddles + 5 cartridges with cartridge rack, £145 Tel. Paul 0942 54136.

ATARI VCS, 7 cartridges 4 months old, £150 Tel. Swansea (0792) 74097 (after 5 pm).

Dragons for sale

DRAGON 32 with basic manuals 2 cartridges joysticks light pen + tape recorder + software £200 Tel. Chelmsford 50092.

DRAGON 32 + joysticks + 3 cartridges games boxed as new, £160 Tel. 01-739 7102.

DRAGON 32, perfect condition £60 software quick sale £160 Tel. 653 7975.

DRAGON 32, tape reads joysticks + 8 cartridges 4 books, £175 Tel. 01-904 4040.

DRAGON 32 with books SuperScope, cassette recorder and software £225 new, sell for £165 Tel. Bridgewater 56292.

Tandys for sale

TANDY TRS 80 model 1 level 11 16K expansion interface unit 16K disc drive 5 1/4 in disc drive interface cable Sekoroka GP-100A printer + cable bulk eraser + disc drive head cleaner, £1,250 ono or sell separately Tel. Chaddock 04449.

TANDY TRS 80, level 11 16K, VDU recorder manual games + utility software, excellent condition, £300 ono Tel. 01-769 1401.

TRS 80 with CTR AT cassette deck, Tandy VDU, etc, software £200 ono Tel. 01-521 0672.

99 chess game module, £25 Parsec game module, £25 Tel. Chard 558 2767 (evenings only).

TANDY TRS 80, level 11 16K, with video monitor and cassette recorder - plus much software including games, £150 Tel. 051-608 7684.

Commodores for sale

VIC20, under guarantee 16K Ram pack, joystick, cassette interface, £75 of software, Tel. 0190 Call 0904 797881.

VIC20, cassette unit, joystick - software £150 Tel. 761 5193.

VIC20, 11 months old cassette recorder 8K Ram 2 cartridges, £40 of cassette software, hardly used, £165 Tel. 0623 793906.

VIC20 5K + manual + 2 programming books + cassette recorder - £50 of software £120 ono Tel. 01-455 6641 after 4.30 pm.

VIC20 16K + 3K Ram pack, dust cover, joystick, £30 8 books Avenger cartridge, over £100 of software, cost £450, want £299 ono. Tel. Abson 027-582 2477 (after 5 pm).

5K VIC20 + manuals + 2 programming books + £50 of software £125 ono Tel. 455 6641, after 4.30 pm.

VIC20 computer + cassette unit software machine code monitor cassette + super expander and joystick, for £155 or near offer Tel. 01-668 8475.

VIC20 cassette unit, still under guarantee, 2 cartridges cassette, software, £115 ono. Tel. Melton Mowbray (Leics) 0664 63402.

COMMODORE VIC20 + C2N tape deck - 8K + joystick - software + cassette + books, £200 ono Tel. 0844-237 678.

VIC20 computer + cassette unit software machine code monitor cassette + super expander and joystick, for £155 or near offer Tel. 01-668 8475.

VIC20 cassette unit, still under guarantee, 2 cartridges cassette, software, £115 ono. Tel. Melton Mowbray (Leics) 0664 63402.

COMMODORE VIC20 + C2N tape deck - 8K + joystick - software + cassette + books, £200 ono Tel. 0844-237 678.

VIC20 cassette unit, 5 months guarantee - joystick - 2 cartridges - cassette software Tel. 01-444 0624.

VIC20 printer £130 ono Tel. Leen, 01-455 0052.

For sale

SHARP MZ80A, as new under guarantee (6 months), includes 6 languages + manuals - software value £800, will sell for £450 Trevor Woodhead, 52 Wykebeck Street Leeds LS9 0HY.

SHARP PC1211, £60 Tel. 031-5673371.

A DRAGON OWNER, wishes to swap software Donkey King Defence, Computer Voice, Champions Lives at Chester Tel. Gareth (0533) 608212.

SHARP MZ 80K COMPUTER, 48K Ram, 16 months old, as new, £250 ono Tel. Kettering 761694.

SWAP, Memotech 64 for ZX81, unused £50 ono Tel. Harlow 027 936 196.

ZX81 COMPANION, C3, Exploring ZX81, Cambridge collection, Wanted Shiva Better Basic and Spectrum Machine Book, machine software and latter Spectrum Keyboard Tel. 01-690 9697.

MORSE CODE TUTOR for the Vic20 + 3K, two tests and 20 speed. Send £4.50 to A Blackam Church Street, Stapleford Nottingham.

23 DRAGON GAMES + joystick, Both or will sell separately Tel. Hull 52572.

VIC20 SOFTWARE for sale, most half-price Reason for sale - changed computer. Tel. 01-568 8323.

SWAP VIC20, Pirates Cove cartridge for Voodoo Castle or The Count Tel. Averton (0842) 895119.

SWAP APPLE II for Vic20 Tel. Farnham 713722.

NEWBRAIN 32K MODEL A, Three months old under guarantee plus all leads, books, demo tape, word-processing tape and printer cable, £170 Tel. Leeds 0532 669178.

LYNX 48K, still under guarantee, two months old - books and tapes, £179 Tel. 01-722 7328.

EG 2000 COLOUR GENIE + a GP 100A printer and Sanyo cassette recorder boxed, £325 Tel. Southend-on-Sea 67793.

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 - **CLUBS** = user can enter any character in the string and the program will respond immediately

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[illegible]

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NEW RELEASES

32 VERSION



Some Vic owners would claim that *Gridrunner* by Jeff Minter was about the best arcade-style game available on the machine. Now a version is available for the Dragon 32, so its cult following can be extended further.

Using a joystick, you pilot your ship — the *Gridrunner* — around a high power station known as the grid. The grid is the earth's last hope for survival, since all the natural energy supplies have been used up. But it has been invaded by a race of evil droids who are moving in linked squads across the grid.

If all this sounds confusing, imagine a cross between *Amidar* and *Caterpillar* — the object is, of course, to destroy the droids.

Program *Gridrunner*
Price £7.95
Micro Dragon 32
Supplier Salamander Software
17 Norfolk Road
Brighton
East Sussex BN1 4AA

DISPLAYED

Dian Display Language is an unusual utility for the Spectrum. In effect it is a dedicated machine code language to manipulate the screen easily.

The central idea is the window, a defined rectangle of lines and columns, which can be individually manipulated apart from the rest of the screen enabling a range of graphics effects.

Dian also has a range of print styles which can be used

within each window. Although it is supposed to be interesting just in itself, the program is intended to have a practical use within small businesses where it could be used for advertising displays.

Program *Dian Display Language*
Price £7.95
Micro Spectrum 16/48K (48 has more type fonts)
Supplier Campbell Systems
15 Rous Road
Buckhurst Hill
Essex IG9 6BJ

ALL MODELS

All things considered, there are not all that many books for the Oric — perhaps half a dozen compared to the 30 or more available for the Spectrum at the same point in its life.

Therefore, Oric owners may be genuinely interested in a new book called *The Oric 1 Program Book*.

The book contains 50 programs for all models of Oric, covering games, graphic displays and machine code techniques.

Book *The Oric 1 Program Book*
Price £5.95
Micro Oric 1
Supplier Phoenix Publishing Associates
14 Vernon Road
Buses
Herts WD2 2JL

UNSAVOURY!



The cover of *Breakaway* from Procom features a woman tied to a post. Large letters tell us that time is running out and we

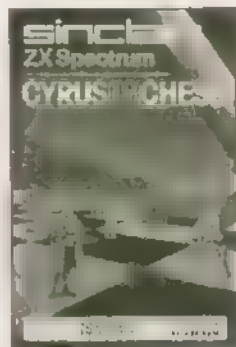
must quickly release her bonds before well, before something or other.

To release her bonds, keys must be pressed as quickly as possible — in this sense the game can be seen as a keyboard trainer since, to press them quickly, you will have to be very familiar with the layout.

Part of the cover blurb describes the program as "a unique game for the whole family. Guaranteed to amuse and frustrate." Hmmmm. I wonder how much of a ———ist you have to be to find the whole concept a bit unsavoury.

Program *Breakaway*
Price £5.95
Micro Spectrum 16/48K
Supplier Procom Software
Musward
109 High Road
Loughton
Essex

CHECKED!



Sinclair has just issued six new cassettes for its machines. Some of these are programs which have been "adopted" by Sinclair from other companies — *Artic's Forth* for example.

One program appearing under the Sinclair banner, which has not been released before, or at least not in this form, is Intelligent Software's *Cyrus Is Chess*.

This is hardly the first Spectrum chess program on the market. However, the core of this program has beaten *Cray Blitz*, a high speed chess program running on an enormous Cray — a machine that costs rather more than £129.

The usual problem with chess programs is that, even though they play quite well at their higher skill levels, they

take so long to decide on their move that they are impossible to use in a sensible way. *Cyrus* has been designed to play well while responding quickly.

Program *Cyrus Is Chess*
Price £9.95
Micro Spectrum 48K
Supplier Sinclair Research
Stanhope Road
Camberley
Surrey

ALL BETS

Vic20 owners can now gamble with their computer.

Pontoon is a version of the card game in which you can play against the computer and bet on your hand.

The program requires at least 6.5K although either a 3K Ram pack or a Super Expander will work.

Program *Poker*
Price £5.50
Micro Vic20 (6.5K)
Supplier David Charles
88 Mount Pleasant Road
Castle Gresley
Nr Burton-upon-Trent
Staffs DE11 9UG

COMING SOON

In a couple of months, Ultimate Play the Game has built up a reputation almost unequalled in the Spectrum Games market — and purely on the strength of two releases, *Past* and *Jet Pac*.

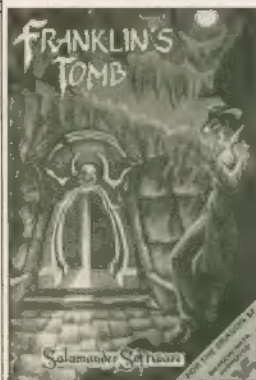
The company is soon to release two more games for the Spectrum, *Tranz Am* and *Cookie*. The first is described as a "real time car chase game set across America" with "one of the largest continual game play areas ever designed for the Spectrum" — suddenly, it seems, everyone is waking up to the lack of good car games on the machine.

Cookie is a "novelty" game about which I know little except that it features "Charlie Chef and the Ingredients" battling it out with "Bin Monster and the Nasties". As a guess I'd say it's probably inspired by the arcade game where you run around the screen making hamburgers and fighting off roving fried eggs, bacon, etc.

Both these games can be expected around the beginning of August and will probably retail for £5.50.

NEW RELEASES

PRIVATE EYE



Franklin's Tomb contains an unusual solution to the problem of combining graphics and text on an adventure game — the pictures, which may contain clues, are contained within the booklet that comes with the program.

Your task in this adventure is to explore a crypt and unlock a puzzle — the solution will give clues to other adventures in the series. The computer has a vocabulary of about 50 verbs and 80 nouns.

You are a Chandler-like private detective — Dan Diamond — who is given, at the

opening of the adventure, a mysterious letter by a beautiful stranger asking for help: "You could cut a piece of paper with the creases in her uniform, but she moved like honey on a hot day."

Whatever the game is like, it certainly gets my vote for blurb of the week.

Program Franklin's Tomb
Price £9.95
Micro Dragon 32
Supplier Salamander
17 Norfolk Road
Brighton
East Sussex BN1 4AA

WORD WRAP

There are two problems with any attempt to turn your Spectrum into an effective word processor.

The most obvious is the keyboard, which is entirely unsuitable for any sort of fast typing. This, however, can be solved by the addition of one of the add-on "real" keyboards currently available.

The other problem is the printer — a dot matrix or daisy wheel will be required for letters, etc., and that means buying an interface to connect it to your machine.

The problem is that the va-

rious interfaces all have to be adapted to function with the particular coding of any word processing program. In the past this information has been elusive to say the least.

Full marks then to Tasman who has included in its explanatory booklet, for the new Tasword Two Word Processor, a leaflet explaining how to use the program with five of the most popular interfaces.

The program gives 64 characters to the line and allows margins and the relocation of text in blocks as well as all the earlier Tasword features of word wrap, justification and word search/replace.

Program Tasword Two
Price £13.90
Micro Spectrum 48K
Supplier Tasman Software
17 Hartley Crescent
Leeds LS6 2LL

PLANTED

If the recent Commodore show is anything to go by, the 64 is likely to be a very successful machine. As yet there have been few software releases for the 64 but the situation is changing rapidly.

Supersoft is one of the main companies in this market so far. Its latest release is *Kaktus* — a game for plant lovers.

You must defend your cactus, the last standing in the desert, from all the animals who would destroy it. These include hornets, wasps, buzzards and moles. Your plant will die if either the base is eaten away or the ground on either side is eroded.

Program Kaktus
Price £8.00
Micro CBM 64
Supplier Winchester House
Canning Road
Wealdstone
Harrow HA3 7SJ

REAL TIME

Salamander has converted its well received *Dragon Trek* program to run on the Oric.

The aim of *Trek* games is to clear the galaxy of Klingons. To do this you use long and short range scans, and various kinds of weapons. Battle encounters are likely to damage your ship and you will

need to dock at a starbase for repairs.

The game comes in three different lengths, determined by the size of galaxy you must explore — the degree of difficulty can also be varied from easy to impossible.

At various points in the game, Lt Uhura will give you helpful messages. These and other events all occur in real time; ie, if you leave the room for a moment, you may come back to find your ship under attack.

Program Oric Trek
Price £9.95
Micro Oric 1 48K
Supplier Salamander
17 Norfolk Road
Brighton
East Sussex BN1 4AA

SEALED!

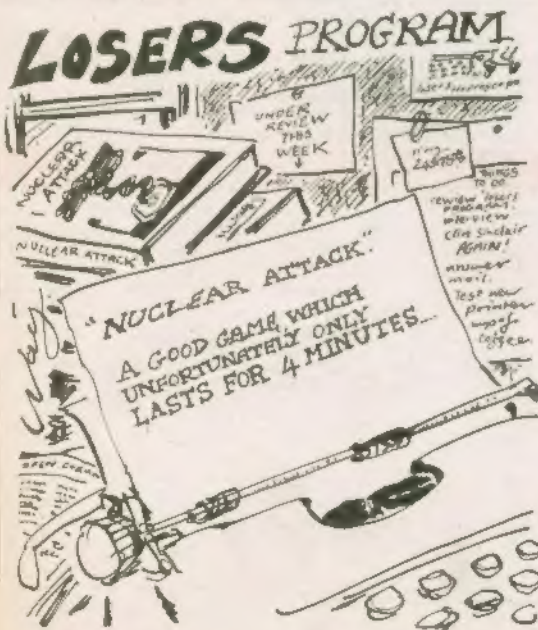


Premier Microsystems has issued a range of games for the Dragon, specialising particularly in adventures.

Although pleasingly packaged with a colour cover, the cassette boxes deliberately contain little information — it is left up to you to discover what happens when you play the game.

However, through exhaustive enquiries, I can now exclusively reveal the following information about one of the games — *Dragon Tower*. It is set in a tower. You must find your way in it. You look around. You try to get out again. Beyond that my lips are sealed.

Program Dragon Tower
Price £7.95
Micro Dragon 32
Supplier Premier Microsystems
208 Croydon Road
Anerley
London SE20 7YX





Cable, cable

One of my favourite monthly magazines is that august journal *Wireless World*, a title which does not really reflect its true coverage. It is an enthralling event to be presented on the one hand with articles on designing a Forth computer (using the 6809 chip), network design using a calculator (TI-59 programmable), and an editorial about information technology (June 1983 issue).

I am an avid reader of the letters to *WW* and noted, in the same issue, that there was a letter from a person living in Milton Keynes. For once, that the person lived in Milton Keynes is relevant since Milton Keynes is the only town so far which has many of the technological gadgets we are promised in our future.

As you may know, there are many interested parties who are trying to persuade those in charge that the UK should be cabled — for those who do not know, I am extremely suspicious of the necessity for such cabling, and do not believe that people will be silly enough to spend so much money for the services.

This brings me to the letter. The writer says that he had been a user of the Milton Keynes cable TV system for the past two years. During that time he had found that the reliability of the network left a lot to be desired: the system failed on average once every two or three weeks and, if the failure was after 6 pm, then it remained out of service until the next day.

The actual quality of the television picture was — so the letter claimed — of a lower quality than the normal standards of broadcast reception. Milton Keynes is in a fringe area for reception, but the writer found that the quality of the picture was better from a loft-mounted aerial (which cost him £5.50).

The reliability and quality of the Milton Keynes system seems, therefore, to be in some doubt

— and the system cannot be that old. This affects arguments about how the UK is to be cabled: are we to be cabled using the high point of technology — optical fibre networks — or are we to be lumbered with the cheaper, less reliable, mammoth of coaxial cables?

Most would-be operators seem to wish to cash in on the old coaxial technology, to save money. Fibre optics (and other changes which would be necessary) would, obviously, be preferable.

But the letter-writer notes that the more complex a system becomes (like a computer program) the more likely it is to fail: he was staying with his little aerial.

That letter was mainly concerned with the quality of TV reception: there is, we are told, far more to cabling than mere television and similar entertainments. A recent attempt to go beyond mere entertainment would seem to be the Micronet 800 system (part of the Prestel system).

Micronet seems to be an expensive way of writing letters or receiving information. I understand — and if I am wrong, I am sure to be corrected — that the system works something like this:

(1) Ring up Micronet.

(2) Select what you want to do from a menu.

(3) Either, depending on your choice, find out something and possibly load a program into your computer. Or, send a message to another Micronet station.

To access Micronet (and sub-systems such as Rewtel) is expensive.

In addition to a computer, you need a means by which your computer can communicate with the system. This means of communication is by an RS232C serial interface. Even if your computer does have such an interface you will still need an adapter (and anyway many computers have parallel rather than serial interfaces).

You might, of course, not bother with a computer and instead buy a terminal. A new terminal costs more than most home computers — though it is possible to buy such terminals secondhand.

But the real drawback with Micronet is the rate at which information is passed by the system. This is 300 baud — to give an idea of what that means, it is the rate at which the ZX81 loads (ie, very slow). For comparison the BBC machine usually runs at 1,200 baud, as does the Spectrum.

Boris Allan

Puzzle

Just restitution

Puzzle No 63

The backroom boys at the Neverjoy Toy Company had been working long hours in the laboratory developing the formula for the 'Springer' (named after the managing director's dog) bouncing rubber ball.

This ball had the remarkable ability of bouncing back to four-fifths of its original height when dropped on to a concrete surface.

This had been demonstrated by letting one drop — on an 'airless' summer day — from the factory roof on to the car park some 250ft below. Measurements had indeed shown that the height reached on each successive bounce was exactly 80 per cent of the bounce before.

Can you say how far the ball travelled before it came to 'rest'?

Solution to Puzzle No 58

The program to solve the puzzle contains a routine that might be useful for any work involving primes as the primes are stored in the array, P. This array has been dimensioned at P(500) which is more than enough for the puzzle — containing the first 500 primes in the years up to 3571. The subroutine checks each successive odd number to see if it is prime and returns T = 0 if no factors are found. Lines 100 to 120 then find the differences between each successive prime and prints out a list of those with a difference of more than 20.

```
10 DIM P(500)
20 LET P(1) = 2
30 LET N = 3
40 FOR Q = 2 TO 500
50 GOSUB 200
60 IF T = 1 THEN
70 LET P(Q) = N
80 LET N = N + 2
90 NEXT Q
100 FOR Z = 1 TO 499
110 IF (P(Z+1) - P(Z)) > 20 THEN PRINT (P(Z+1) - P(Z))
120 NEXT Z
130 STOP
140 LET N = N + 2
150 GOTO 50
200 LET T = 0
210 FOR F = 3 TO INT(SQR(N+0.5))
220 LET S = VAL STR$(N/F)
230 IF S = INT S = 0 THEN LET T = 1
240 IF T = 1 THEN GOTO 250
250 NEXT F
260 RETURN
```

By running the program it is discovered that:

(i) The next pair of prime years having a gap of 22 years will be 2311 to 2333.

(ii) The next gaps of 24, 26 and 28 will occur in 2179 to 2203, 2477 to 2503 and 2971 to 2999, respectively.

(iii) The largest gap to date was the 34 years between 1327 and 1361.

As a point of interest, such a gap will not be equalled again until the 36 years between 9551 and 9587.

Winner of Puzzle No 58

The winner is: Danny Langton, Whitmore Close, New Southgate, London, who receives £10.

Top 10

Vic20

- (2) Arcadia (Imagine)
- (4) Wacky Walters (Imagine)
- (5) Catcha Snatcha (Imagine)
- (7) Asteroids (Bug-Byte)
- (1) Panic (Bug-Byte)
- (3) Cosmooids (Bug-Byte)
- (6) Kalktus (Audiogenic)
- (8) Hoppit (Commodore)
- (9) Mergrove (Audiogenic)
- (10) Amok (Audiogenic)

(Figures compiled by Boots & Co, London)

Top 10

Spectrum

- (2) Penetrator (Melbourne House)
- (1) Flight Simulation (Paión)
- (3) Transylvanian Tower (Richard Shepherd)
- (4) Jet Pac (Ultimate)
- (5) The Hobbit (Melbourne House)
- (6) 3D Tars (DK Tronics)
- (8) Al Diddums (Imagine)
- (7) Horace Goes Skiing (Paión/Melbourne House)
- (9) Hungry Horace (Paión)
- (10) Chess (Paión)

*Requires 48K.
(Figures compiled by W H Smith & Son Ltd)

Top 10

Atari

- (2) Zaxxon (Datasoft)
- (6) Preppie 2 (Adventure International)
- (1) Miner 2049er (Big Five)
- (5) Time Warp (English Software)
- (4) Xarcion Trail (English Software)
- (7) Air Strike (English Software)
- (3) Stone of Sisyphus (Adventure International)
- (8) Necromancer (Synapse)
- (9) Pharaoh's Curse (Synapse)
- (10) Mountain King (CBS)

*32K cassette, *16K cartridge, *48K disc.
(Figures compiled by Calisto Computers, Birmingham 021-532 6456)

Top 10

Dragon

- (1) The King (Microdeal)
- (2) Talking Android Attack (Microdeal)
- (3) Nightlife (Salamander)
- (4) Dragon Trek (Winteros)
- (5) Space War (Microdeal)
- (6) Graphics System (Salamander)
- (7) Caterpillar Attack (Microdeal)
- (8) Chess Out (Dragon Data)
- (9) Mixed Out (Quicksave)
- (10) Typing Tutor (Dragon Data)

*Cartridge
(Figures compiled by Boots & Co, London)

BBC

- (1) Kiffer Gorilla (Program Power)
- (2) Planitoid (Accornoff)
- (4) Rocket Raid (Accornoff)
- (10) Inheritance (Simon W Hessel)
- (5) Painter (A + F)
- (2) Great Britain Limited (Simon W Hessel)
- (7) Sphinx Adventure (Accornoff)
- (3) Word Wise (Computer Concepts)
- (9) Philosopher's Quest (Accornoff)
- (10) Landfall (Virgin Games)

*Model B
(Figures compiled by Micro Management, Ipswich 0473 59151)

ZX81

- (1) 3D Monster Maze (New Generation)
- (2) Flight Simulation (Paión)
- (3) OS Scramble (Quicksave)
- (4) Alien Dropout (Silversoft)
- (5) Osteacans (Paión)
- (6) Chess (Accornoff)
- (7) 10 Games for 1K (J K Greyell)
- (8) Asteroids (Asteroids)
- (9) Avenger (Abacus)
- (10) Night Gunner (Digital Integration)

*All 16K except where shown. †Fluents in 1K.
(Figures compiled by W H Smith & Son Ltd)

Books

- (5) Programming the BBC Micro, Williams (Newnes)
- (1) Vic Programmers Reference Guide, Commodore (Commodore)
- (4) Structured Programming with BBC Basic, Atherton (Horwood)
- (6) Spectrum Hardware Manual, Dickens (Melbourne House)
- (7) 6502 Machine-code For Beginners, Stephenson (Newnes)
- (10) Commodore 64 Programmers Reference Guide, Commodore (Commodore)
- (1) Basic Programming On The BBC Micro, Cyster (Pentecost-Hall)
- (8) 6809 Assembly Language Programming, Leverthal (Osbourne)
- (9) Assembly Language Programming For The BBC Micro, Bimbaum (Macmillan)
- (3) 35 Educational Programs For The BBC Micro, Murray (Century)

(Figures compiled by Watford Technical Books, Watford 9223 23324)
(Last week's position in brackets)

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